ISSUE 42 MARCH 1991 £1.80

ACE

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THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE

ADVANCED C R ENTERTAINMENT

CRIME BUSTER!

Interactive Sleuthing in Sierra's Rise of the Dragon

ACE IN THE STATES

First CES '91 Report

Including:

SENSE 8
Portable Virtual Reality

LUCASFILM
Team Interview

VIRTUAL SEX
It could only happen in California!

WING COMMANDER 2

ULTIMA VII

CDTV

The Case of the Cautious Condor

WIN!

Amazing TOKI Coin-op up for Grabs!

THINK PINK!

30 Pages of Software Steals and Bargain Buys

PLUS: R-Type 2, Team Suzuki Trailblazer, Dragon's Lair II
Mig 29, Hard Driving 2, NARC vs Crimewave, + Many more

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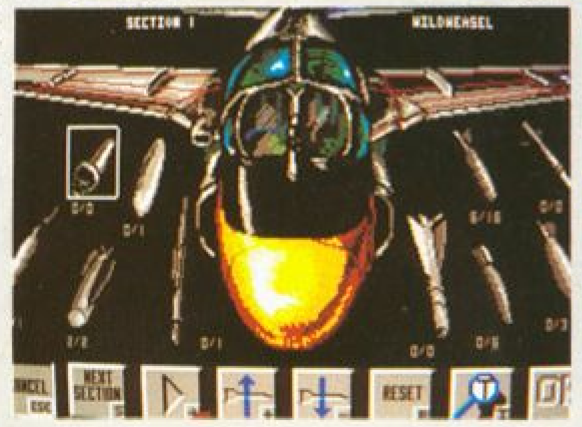
FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER™



Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the deadliest air combat environment the world has ever known – the skies above North Vietnam.

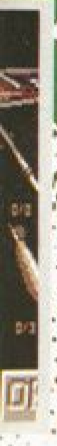
In 1972, the USAF launched Operation Linebacker. US forces and their South Vietnamese allies are locked in a life and death struggle with the fanatical North Vietnamese Army. You must stem the tide of the North Vietnamese offensive by cutting its vital lifeline to its front line troops.

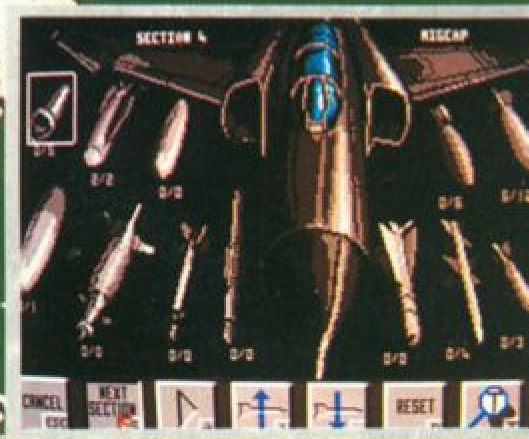
From the US Carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin on "Yankee Station", you must attack a variety of installations defended by surface to air missiles and the MiG fighters of the skillful and determined North Vietnamese Air Force.

Only team work will get you back alive. The "IRON HAND" flights must destroy or suppress the surface to air missiles whilst Combat Air Patrol aircraft circle high above the strike force looking out for enemy aircraft. Finally, the strike aircraft must find and attack the target braving a hail of small arms and anti-aircraft artillery fire at low level. Individual survival is not the only measure of success, it is the success of the mission as a whole that counts – there is no place for seekers of individual glory.

Enemy aircraft featured are the nimble MiG17 and the more advanced supersonic MiG21, capable of out turning any USAF aircraft.

Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the real world of operational flying and mission planning.





FEATURES

Choose between two of the best aircraft that ever flew. The F-4 Phantom is fast, powerful and equipped with highly advanced avionics. It is so flexible that it can perform any type of mission. The A-6 Intruder has the first all weather computer operated weapons guidance system (DIANE) and an outstanding weapons load, both have stood the test of time and are still in service.

- Up to 8 friendly and 4 enemy aircraft on screen simultaneously.
- 2 different aircraft accurately simulated. 3 different roles: MIGCAP, IRON HAND, or STRIKE.
- Realistic mission environment with enemy artificial intelligence.
- Switch between friendly aircraft in flight.
- Carrier take-off and landing with "MEATBALL" landing aid.
- In-flight radio messages with radio message queueing system.
- View from all aspects and 14 in cockpit views.
- Large numbers of mobile targets including trucks, trains and barges.
- Realistic terrain taken from contemporary operations maps including Hanoi, Haiphong and Than Hoa.
- Instant "Quickstart" option.

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Spectrum HoloByte

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BY THE AUTHORS OF FALCON

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> "The manne, having appeared from no where, then spake to me, enquiring whither I had come and demanding that I refet ye machine. I was sore afraide, left he unleafh some devilry upon me. He then vanifhed, with ye magic words Faytul Siftum Erra."
>
> **Unexplained entry in Pepy's diary for April 1st, 1665.**

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reviews

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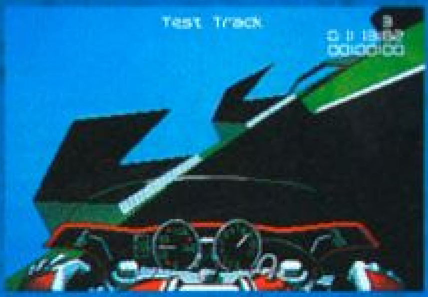
[illegible] **HANDHELD ROUNDUP** *Gameboy*

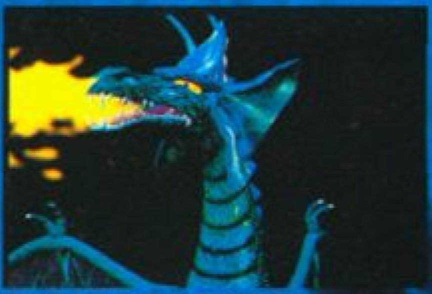
We cast a critical eye over four [illegible] and find their quality varying wildly.

ON CD *page 29*

You've seen the cartoon-quality graphics on the front page. Now read all about the Case of the Cautious Condor.



Gremlin's *Team Suzuki* is the first game to be awarded the Trailblazer award. See Screen Test...



Images like this will be appearing your [illegible] arcade soon, thanks to Angel Studios. *Page* [illegible]

The Case of the "Cautious Condor"

CD: *The Case of the Cautious Condor.* Full story and more great pics on page 29.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

You can't have helped but notice the free tips supplement adorning the front of this month's issue. After feeding details of every game on the market into our ACE Market Forces and Gameplay Analysis Computer, we shortlisted 10 of the best examples of popular computer gaming. And we've compiled a detailed set of tips for each. So, those of you who own a copy of Robocop 2, Lemmings, F-19, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, Awesome, Prince of Persia, Battle Command, Powermonger or Ultima VI, will be laughing.

Whether you're vanquising dragons, slamming steel balls into future goals, swordfighing or simply shooting things, our tips will help.

Bullfrog reveal their plans for long. Turn to page 39 to read about Populous 2, Powermonger mission disks and to see how long a goldfish fairs against the Frog's pet Piranha.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

A month of contrasts. Braving the foul West Coast sunshine, battling through the wretched shanty-town existence of Las Vegas, erstwhile Editor Steve Cooke puts on a brave face and reports from the *1991 Consumer Electronics Show*. There's the world's first portable Virtual Reality machine, a report from *Angel Studios* who are pushing coin-op graphics further than ever before and all the news from *Lucasfilm* and *Electronic Arts*. Back in Blighty,we concentrate on software. *Team Suzuki, Dragon's Lair 2, Mig 29, Hard Driving 2* and *NARC* all get the thorough Screen Test treatment. And of course, there's a free 24 page Tricks 'n' Tactics supplement too.

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Your chance to win this amazing coin-op courtesy of Ocean Software.

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"Money too tight to mention? You should read ACE" Bargains and facts galore. Public Domain, hardware, games and the Stockmarket too.

ACE

MARCH 1991

NO-ONE laughs at the wide [illegible] Blade Hunter, P.I."

COVER STORY

Sierra-on-Line, famed for [illegible] Quest series and the "unique" Leisure Suit Larry have delved deep into the film noir genre to produce *Rise of the Dragon*, an interactive point-and-click comic [illegible]

If you desire a challenge beyond human experience..

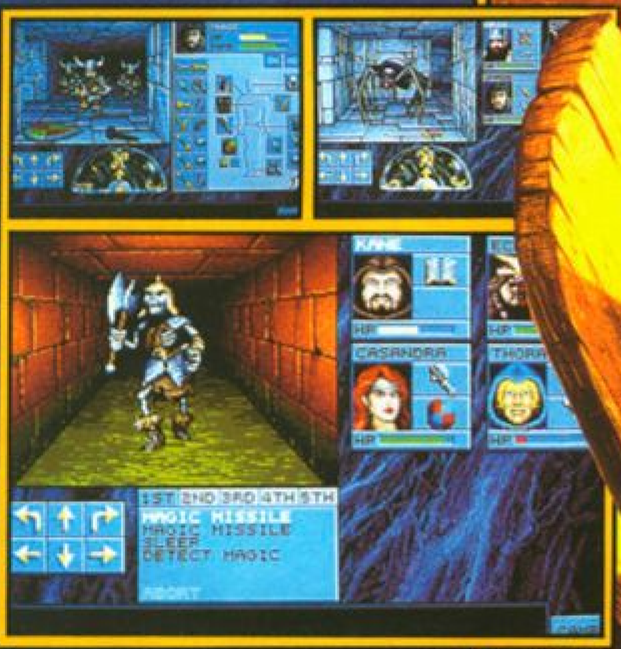
Move up to a world of role-playing adventure and take on a true challenge

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Eye of the Beholder is an unbelievable task for beginner or veteran. But believe this ,whatever your role-playing experience, Eye of the Beholder will SURPRISE, STIMULATE and CHALLENGE you every step of the way.

- *100% point 'n' click game control.*
- *Fully animated encounters with realistic 'you are there' perspective.*
- *A web of deceit and intrigue draws you into the totally addictive plot.*
- *Control up to 6 characters via their portraits and icons.*

SSI's AD&D® computer role-playing games have gained a reputation for great gameplay. Now they have added incredible graphic presentation and a user interface that makes this game the state-of-the-art for computer role-playing adventure games.



Screen shots from various formats

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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FORGOTTEN REALMS™

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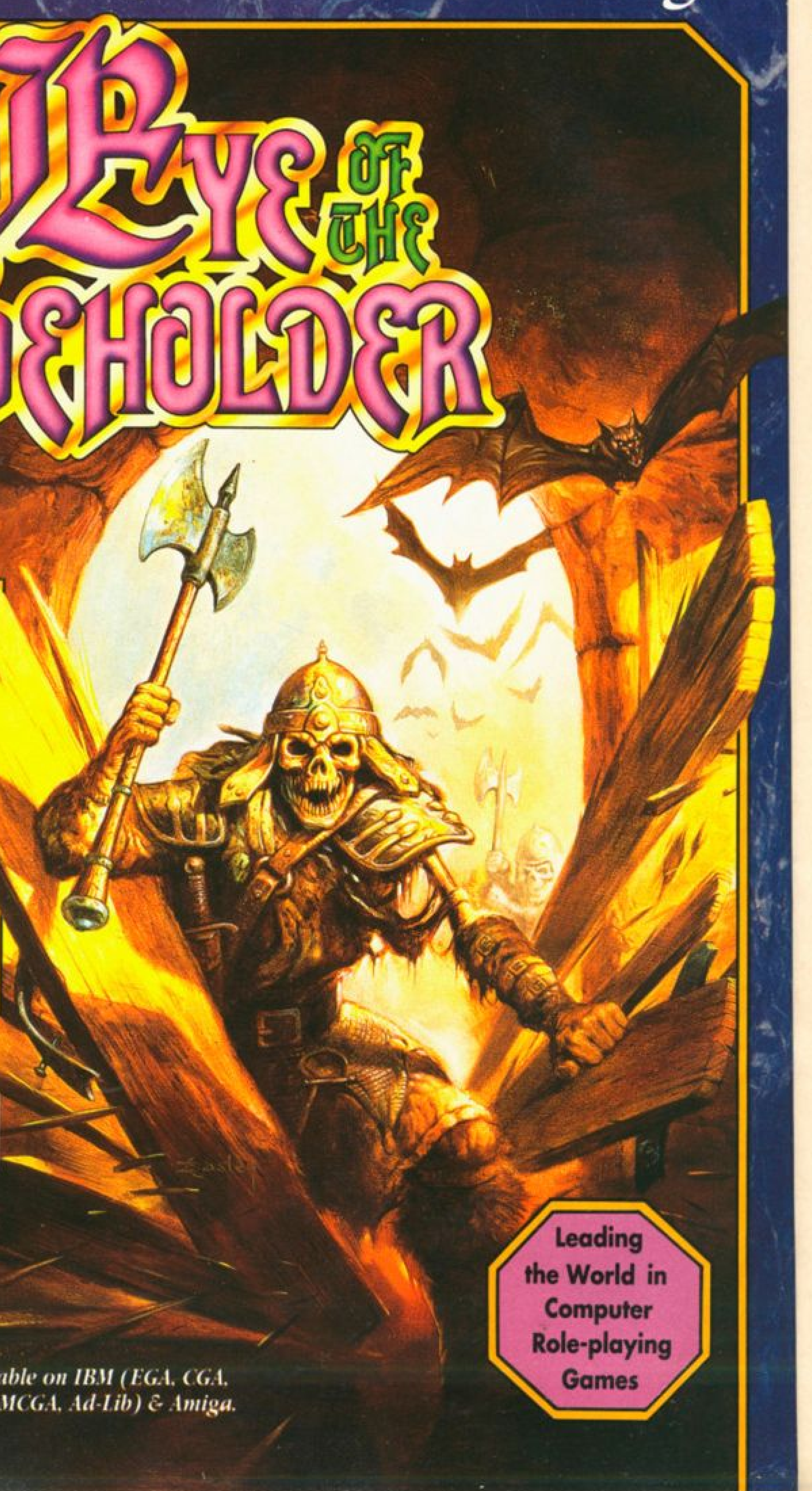
AD&D® Second Edition game rules



Available on IBM (EGA, CGA, VGA, MCGA, Ad-Lib) & Amiga.

Leading the World in Computer Role-playing Games

Here comes Cyber Car

Say goodbye to parking problems, theft and ever getting lost again. Mercedes Benz take all the fun out of driving.

Mercedes-Benz, the respected German auto-manufacturer, unveiled the 'car of the future' at the Detroit Motor Show last month.

Everything in this six/eight seater is new. The driver sits in the centre of the vehicle making it suitable for both left and right-hand drive. Twin cameras and a monitor provide excellent rear visibility and a radar system warns of other vehicles changing lanes or possible hazards ahead. The F100 has a HUD-like central display screen to replace the usual instrument panel, which automatically prioritises information.

F100 can run on petrol, electricity or hydrogen, with the latter offering a solution to the problems of oil-shortages and global warming due to exhaust fumes.

The result of extensive research by both Mercedes-Benz AG and Daimler Benz, there are no plans to put the F100 into production.

Forget your Porsche turbo-nutter, this is the car to drive on the autobahn!

Things are seldom what they seem, especially when you're eating genetically engineered food. Do you remember the advert for Quorn "the tiny relative of the mushroom" starring a host of farmyard muppets and the bloke from That's Life. Well, feast your taste-buds on this. Quorn is, in fact, fermented filamentous fungus. Does anyone fancy a second-helping?

Games will soon talk to one another

Bullfrog, the creators of *Populous* and *Powermonger*, have told ACE about an exciting plan to enable future games to share data and talk to one another. If other software developers agree to join this revolutionary idea, players will be able to save characters from one game and load them into another and continue play in this totally new environment. You could fly the fighter from *Xenon III* over the lands of *Populous II!*

"What we hope to do, and it's not official yet, is to transfer the information between our games and titles like *Sim City* from Maxis," says Peter Molyneux, the boss of Bullfrog. "So if you've got a saved game on *Sim City 2*, you can put it into *Populous II* and play on the same world as you had in *Sim City 2*." Molyneux adds, "Obviously you can't do this with all games".

Bullfrog would like all simulations in the future to be data-compatible. "All this means is a few software developers have to get together and talk about what they're doing," explains Molyneux. "We've already sat down with some people and said 'Let's do it'. Everybody thinks it will be nice but the details have yet to be sown up. I'm not quite sure how the copyright side would work out. It all get's rather petty at this stage. There's a very good chance of *Populous II* being data compatible with other games. You'll certainly be able to take things from *Powermonger* and *Populous* and put them into *Populous II*."

What do you think about this idea? Write in to ACE Letters and tell us!

May The Force Be With You

Lucasfilm Games and JVC Musical Industries are working together on a new Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) game based around the famous *Star Wars* movie.

"*Star Wars* for the NES will offer the most compelling first-person 3D space flight and combat sequences ever," says Lucasfilm Games, part of the giant movie company that created the original movies.

In the forthcoming game, players will be able to control *Star Wars*' characters Luke Skywalker, Han Solo and Princess Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi, C-3PO and R2-D2. Each character has unique strengths and weaknesses, so players must learn which character is most effective in different situations.

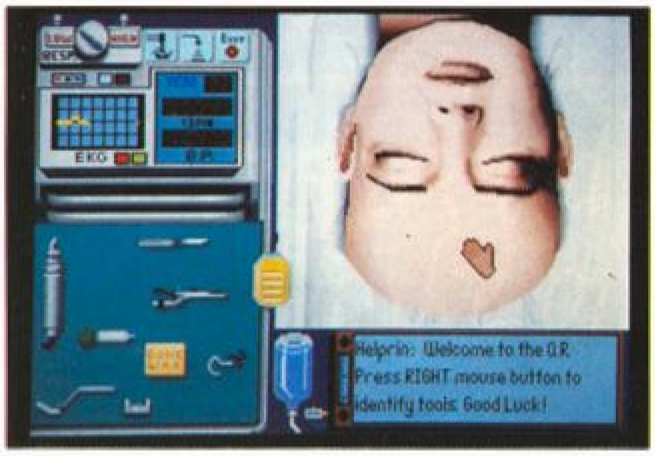
Like the movie, *Star Wars* begins in the Tatooine Desert. Luke, in his landspeeder, must dodge boulders, shoot Jawas and avoid sandsnakes in a search for Obi-Wan Kenobi, who will give him a lightsaber and teach him the ways of the Force. Luke's adventure lead him to the town of Mos Eisley, where he fends off stormtroopers and meets Han Solo, pilot of the Millennium Falcon. They then have to rescue Princess Leia from Darth Vader, who holds her prisoner on the Death Star. Once they have escaped, players must navigate the trenches of the Death Star in an X-Wing fighter before dropping the fatal missile to demolish the dreams of the Empire.

The four game sections are split between top-down and side-to-side scrolling displays. Top-down play involves vehicle manoeuvring, including exploring the surface of the Tatooine Desert in the landspeeder and the exterior of the Death Star in an X-Wing. Horizontal scrolling sequences include explorations of the Mos Eisley spaceport and the labyrinth corridors inside the Death Star. Passwords allow players to restart a game where they left off.

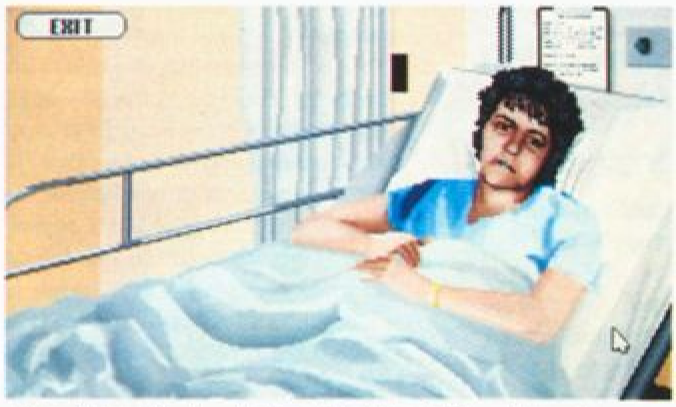
"JVC Musical Industries and Lucasfilm Games make an unbeatable teams," says Satoshi Honda, General Manager of Victor Musical Industries, "Our combined creativity, programming skill and experience will make *Star Wars* one of the most important games published for the NES in 1991."

Lucasfilm Games is handling the design and marketing of the *Star Wars* NES game while JVC Musical Industries is looking after the sales and distribution. *Star Wars* will soon be released on the NES and adaptions for the Nintendo Super Famicom and PC are also under consideration.

Are you confused by your zillion-function TV remote controller? Mitsubishi may have a solution to your problems with its PRM-1 remote control. This pen-sized device uses visual and tactile clues to distinguish the channel, volume and power buttons. The PRM-1 has won a gold award from the


Helprin: Welcome to the O.R. Press RIGHT mouse button to identify tools. Good Luck!

Your first patient on the slab, this is where the fun begins, pass me that drill.



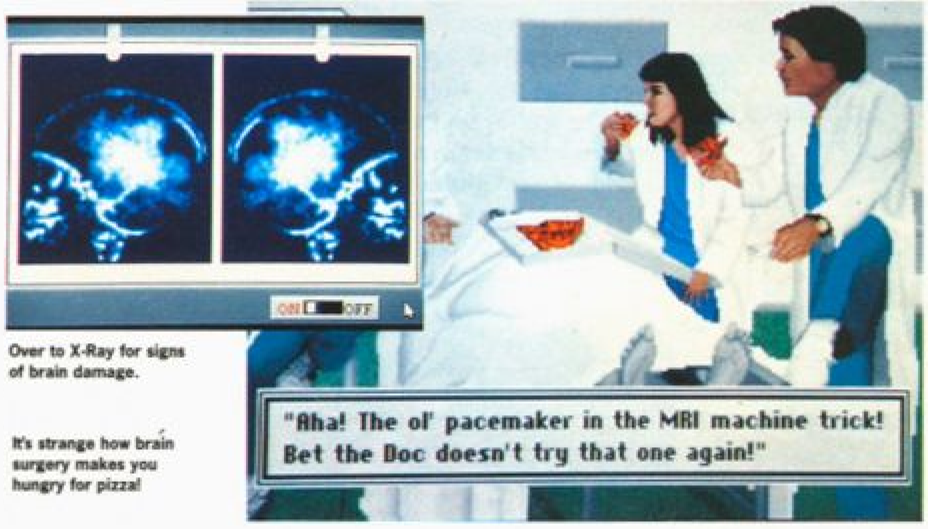
This patient could be drug addicts or stroke victim, what do you diagnose?

I want to be a Brain Surgeon

In the original *Life & Death* from Software Toolworks and Mindscape, players became a physician responsible for treating an appendectomy or a Dracon graft of an aortal aneurysm. In *Life & Death II*, players enter the neurosurgery wing of Toolworks General Hospital and go for the brain!

Does your patient have an aneurysm, tumour or a food allergy? X-Rays, CAT scans, MRI's... as a Toolworks General Doctor, you have the all the modern-day facilities to help your diagnoses. Eventually, your skill at the scalpel will determine whether your patient makes it to recovery... or the morgue!

Life & Death II: The Brain supports full 256-colour VGA graphics and features sampled sound effects for the respirator, EKG beeps and bone drilling tools. No gruesome detail has been excluded. The game is available now on the PC, with Mindscape currently converting *Life & Death II* to the Amiga and ST. A CDTV version is also under consideration.


"Aha! The ol' pacemaker in the MRI machine trick! Bet the Doc doesn't try that one again!"

Over to X-Ray for signs of brain damage.

It's strange how brain surgery makes you hungry for pizza!

Mario goes to the movies

Danny DeVito, the pint-sized actor from *Taxi* and *Twins*, is to star in *The Super Mario Bros* live-action movie, the first feature film to be based around a video game character.

The *Super Mario Bros* video game series from Nintendo, which has sold more than 32 million games in the U.S. since its introduction five years ago, has made Mario America's most popular animated character. He's even more popular than Mickey Mouse! DeVito will play Mario in the movie, which will go into production in mid-91 for an expected summer 1992 release.

Developed as a comedy-adventure to appeal to both adults and children, *The Super Mario Bros* movie will be written by Barry Morrow, who scripted the Oscar-winning *Rain Man*. It is understood that Dustin Hoffman owns the movie rights to the Mario character. The only other films to have had a strong video game flavour are Disney's *Tron* and *The Wizard* starring 'Kevin' from *The Wonder Years* TV show.

"We feel privileged to bring such well-loved characters as Mario and Luigi to the big screen," says LightMotive, the LA-based production company in charge of the *Super Mario Bros* motion picture. "We look forward to the challenge of creating a story which brings them to life while being true to the spirit of their world."

In the past 12 months, gross sales revenues from the video game *Super Mario Bros III* total $427,334,000 - revenues which, if the game had been a film, would rank it second only to *ET*, the largest grossing movie in entertainment history.

I don't think this patient is seeing eye-to-eye with you!

Gameboy gets serious

Super Mario Land is a tough act to follow, so GameTek from North Miami Beach in Florida has developed *InfoGenius*, the first line of informational software designed specifically for the Gameboy.

Five *InfoGenius* products have been introduced based on licensing agreements with top-of-the-line reference sources including Berlitz language translators and Frommer's travel guides.

The *InfoGenius Spell Checker & Calculator* enables users to correct spelling errors of over 70,000 of the most commonly misspelled words. The user enters a word via an on-screen keyboard. The correct spelling and a list of words of related alphabetical or phonetic origin is then displayed. The user can also perform mathematical functions.

Both the English/Spanish and English/French language translators use data separated into travel categories such as restaurants, hotels and shopping. An on-screen keyboard is used to spell any one of over 12,500 words in either English, French or Spanish. The phrases are also separated into specific travel categories and the user may view lists of over 300-related phrases. A metric/currency converter is also included.

The *InfoGenius Travel Guide* provides information on hotels, restaurants, sights and attractions, sports and recreation and night-life in America. It also includes information and emergency numbers. Descriptions and helpful hints are provided for each selection and city. All data is accessed by either price or location or both. The automatic phone dialler can be used to call any number in the database either locally or long-distance.

InfoGenius products will be available in September priced $39.99 each. GameTek is also a developer of software for the Nintendo Entertainment System, computers and coin-ops. The company, whose games are family-orientated and non-violent, produces a line of children's games, sports games and adaptions of popular American board-games and television game shows such as Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune. GameTek markets and distributes games licensed by Fisher-Price, Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers.

DCC... it's the size of an audio cassette and sounds like a Compact Disc.

Phillips launches new audio system

Digital Compact Cassette (DCC) is a new sound medium developed by Philips and Matsushita that records and plays digital sound on new-style Compact Cassettes but remains compatible with normal audio cassettes.

The DCC product range for home, portable and in-car use will be introduced in 1992. The new prerecorded Digital Compact Cassettes will be available in parallel. The new cassettes are similar in size to the existing ones but have a new high-tech design. Additional advantages of DCC will be the convenient track selection facility and a standard auto-reverse function. The DCCs have a playing time of 90 minutes and offer the benefits of digital sound quality.

"Just as we did with Compact Disc, we expect the DCC standard will become the new worldwide standard for this medium," says Wim Wielens, Managing Director of Philips Audio.

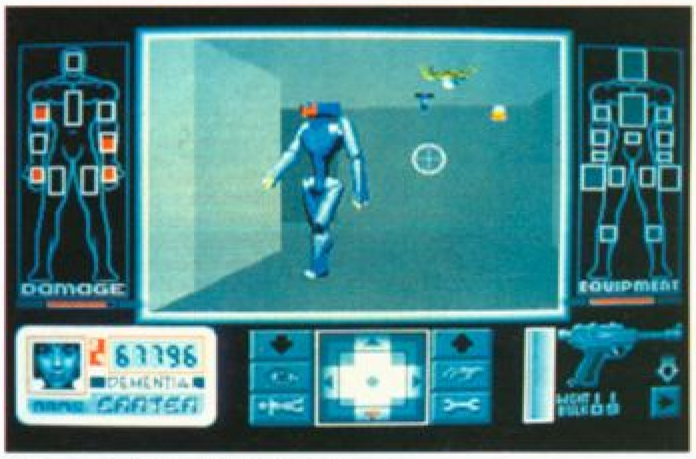
Tandy is the first licensee of DCC and Philips is offering manufacturing licenses to all interested hardware and software companies. The rival Digital Audio Tape (DAT) system developed by Sony provides a longer playing time than DCC but is not compatible with existing analogue cassettes. DAT players are already on sale in Japan. Philips offers, "DCC is a totally new tape recording system addressing the musical possibilities of today and tomorrow. But it also makes the fullest possible use of the best of proven technology. Digital Compact Cassettes are not only more attractive and more rugged than the old Compact Cassettes; they take this simple carrier into the highest sound class for the first time".

Extra missions for *Corporation*

Core Design has released an extra missions disk for its successful sci-fi fantasy role-playing adventure.

The *Corporation Mission Disk* is effectively a whole new game with another 16 levels of robot-infested corridors to conquer. It also includes more graphics to discover. Unfortunately, players cannot transfer built-up characters from the original game. The *Corporation Mission Disk* costs £14.99 for Amiga and ST. Core Design says the *Mission Disk* is harder to play and features more rewards and objects to collect.

The Derby-based company is now working on the PC version of *Corporation* (due in the spring) and *Corporation II*, a 'completely redesigned follow-up with many innovative features which takes players up into space'. This sequel will be launched in September.



The *Corporation Mission Disk* includes extra graphics, a new big bad robot, plants and furniture.

Web of chaos

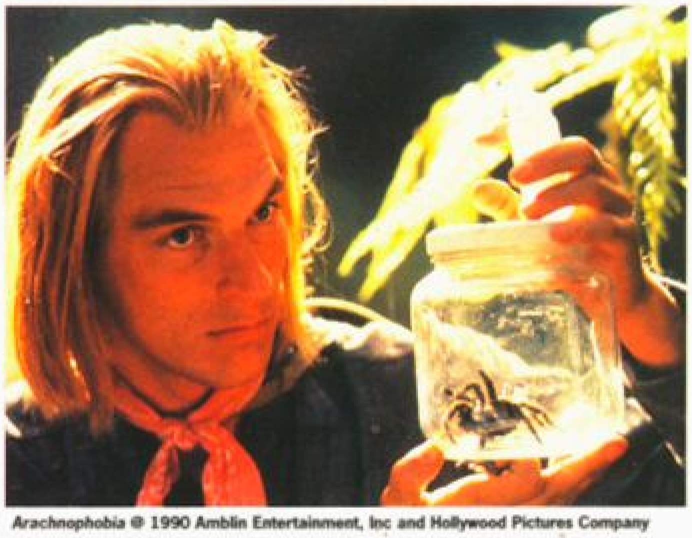
What has eight legs, two fangs and an attitude? *Arachnophobia*, the latest suspense movie from Steven Spieberg's Amblin' Entertainments, is soon to be turned into a computer game from Entertainment International.

The film is set in Canaima, California - the ideal spot for Dr Ross Jennings and his wife Molly to raise their two children. Far from the dangers and congestion of the city, this picturesque community nestled between rolling green hills and rocky cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean promises fresh air and friendly people. In the days following the arrival of the Jennings family several of Canaima's citizens die under strange circumstances. Dr Jennings begins to investigate the mysterious deaths and calls on the help of two experts; Dr James Atherton, a world-renowned entomologist, and Delbert McClintock, pest exterminator extraordinaire. But by the time they manage to convince the shocked residents what has really arrived in Canaima, the sleepy hamlet has already been caught in a web of chaos.

"The game is true to the film scenario," says Entertainment International, "You are hired to track down and free the town from the spiders. After liberating your house you have to find the nest and nip disaster in the bud. To destroy the spiders you can use pulverising insecticide, fumigating bombs or a flame-thrower. The levels represent different parts of the house - the roof, loft, cellar, and so on. Throughout the different levels you encounter spiders that attack you. Not all the spiders react in the same way to your presence - some will jump, others will bite your ankles or scratch your eyes out. There's also a coward who will run away when you approach."

Arachnophobia is being programmed for the PC, Amiga and C64 by Incredible Technologies in America. Titus in France is providing the ST version. The movie is currently on general release and the game will be available in a couple of months.

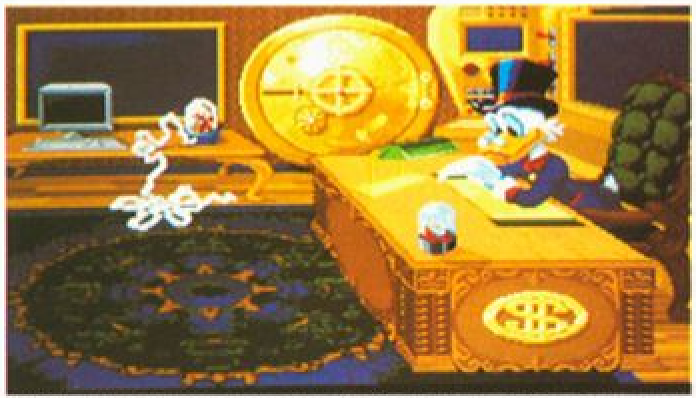
asbro, the hottest toy manufacturer of the 1980's, is selling the technology behind its Nemo interactive television entertainment system. The American toy firm responsible for My Little Pony, Transformers and Visionaries spent



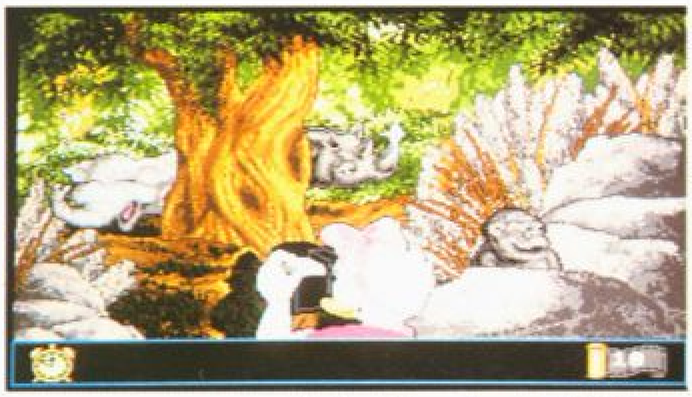
Arachnophobia © 1990 Amblin Entertainment, Inc and Hollywood Pictures Company

What's up Duck?

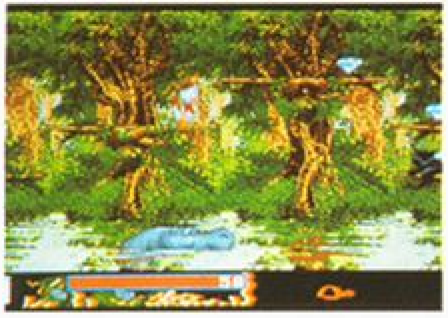
The game begins in Scrooge's office in Duckburg. Here you can play the stock market or choose the next place to explore.

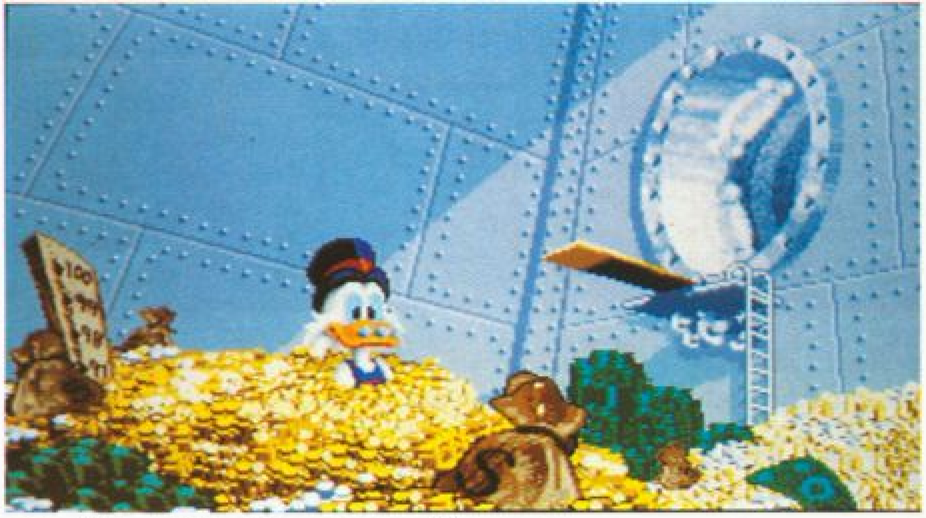


Webby makes a 'guest appearance' in the Photo Safari arcade game. You must photograph some exotic beasts and sell their pictures to the Duckburg Museum. Look out for the Dolly Lama, Rhinestone Rhino and Tigger Lilly!



It's a jungle out there and you've got to hack your way through snake-infested swamps and swim among the hippopotami.





A dive into Scrooge's Money Bin sometimes provides a rare coin.

Walt Disney's answer to those teenage turtles is simply ducktastic. *Ducktales*, a full-length animated feature film will be hitting big screens around the country later this month along with a computer game courtesy of Disney Software, Titus and Entertainment International. *Ducktales* was originally a charming television cartoon series starring, not surprisingly, relatives of Disney's Donald Duck.

The *Ducktales – Quest for Gold* game is based around an episode from the TV series and features a

Societe Europeenne des Satellites, the Luxembourg-based company that operates the Astra broadcasting satellite used by Sky, has ordered two new satellites from Hughes Aircraft of El Secundo, California. These are due to be launched by Ariane in 1993 and 1994. The Astra 1D satellite will be able to cope with wide-screen HDTV transmissions.

Top games mag in paper change shock!

ACE aims to bring high-quality arthouse stock to the masses, claims Editor.

The next issue of ACE magazine will have a decidedly different feel about it. It'll still bring you the very best news, views and reviews on the buzzing future-tech scene, hot games reviews and in-depth tips. But it will be printed on the highest quality arthouse paper. But, from now on, ACE will cost an extra 20p.

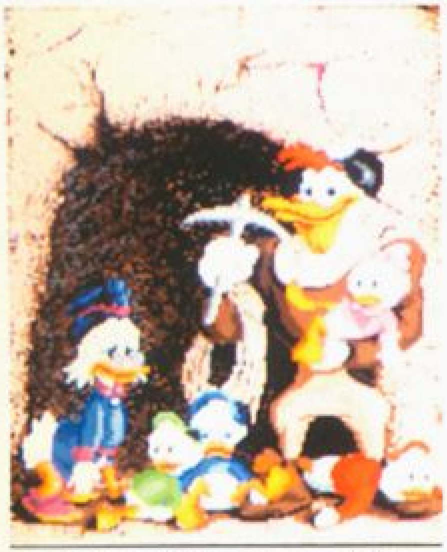
Explaining the change, Jim Douglas claims that it will make ACE feel and look like the quality publication it really is. "The paper holds colour more effectively, is nicer to the touch and will help our design department to make each issue of ACE a real masterpiece.

"The graphic quality of today's games is so much higher, with console and CD products especially leading the way with colourful cartoon-quality animation. Our switch to the new stock will help us give an even more accurate representation of what you can expect to see on the screen.

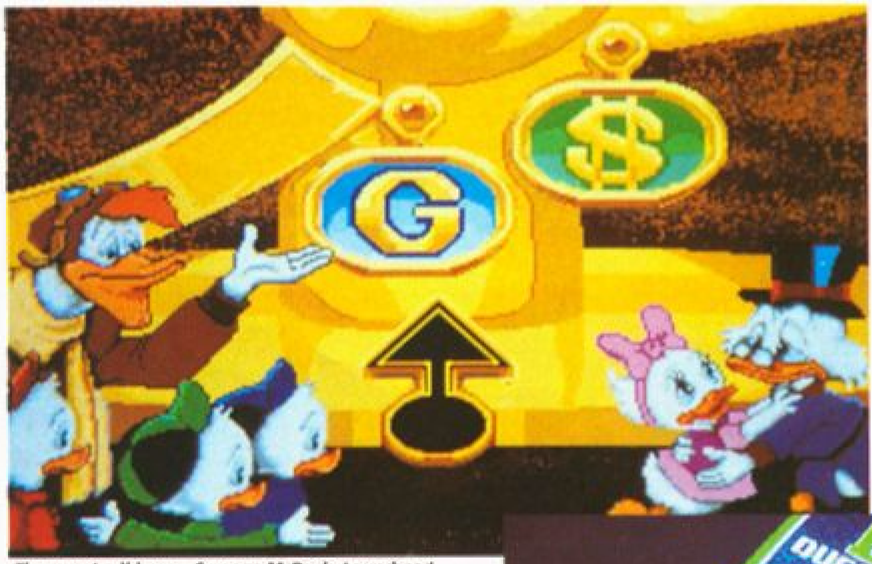
"Each issue will also stand up better to the thorough thumbing it will receive, and we'll be continually updating our design strategy to make optimum use of the higher quality paper.

"This year ACE will also be offering more supplements, free gifts and big-prize competitions than ever before. Readers can look forward to bigger issues too.

"We're investing a lot of cash in the paper-change and absorbing most of the cost. Inevitably, though, we've had to increase the cover price by a small amount. I am sure readers will be more than pleased with the result."



Launchpad McQuack is Scrooge's personal pilot, winner of the prestigious Cooked Goose trophy, presented to 'the flyer most likely to use his parachute'.



The gang's all here... Scrooge McDuck, Launchpad McQuack, Webby, Huey, Dewey and Louie. Not a good time to mention Peking Duck!

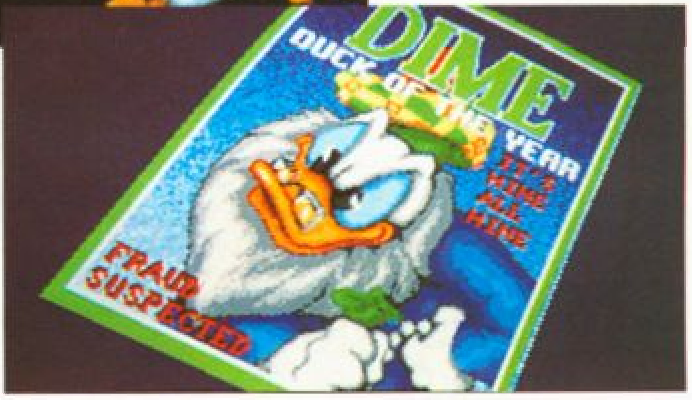
contest between Flintheart Glomgold and Scrooge McDuck. Whoever can collect the most money in 30 days will become *Dime* Magazine's Duck of the Year.

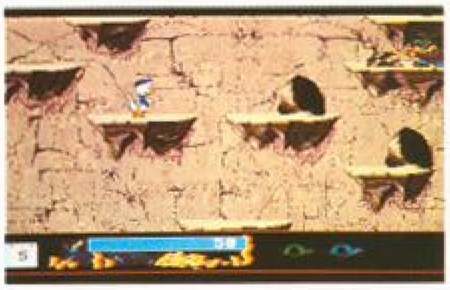
Described by Disney as a "pulse-pounding action-adventure full of excitement and challenge", this humorous adventure is split into six different arcade games incorporating colourful cartoon graphics and digitised speech.

Players must help Scrooge and his friends win the contest by travelling all over the world, collecting treasures and investing in the stock market. At the end of the contest, players return to the Isle of Macaroon to weigh their money against Glomgold's. Fame is reserved for the person with the biggest fortune. There's no spot on Wogan for second-best, you probably wouldn't even get on the Jonathan Ross show.

Ducktales - Quest for Gold is aimed at players under the age of 12. The game has been programmed for the Amiga, PC and C64 cartridge by Incredible Technologies in the States, Titus has converted it to the ST. Versions for the Spectrum and Amstrad are currently under consideration.

It looks as though you've lost the game, perhaps you should have bought those shares in *Dime* magazine after all!





Use your rope and grappling hook to pull yourself up to the high ledges in the Mountain Climbing arcade game.

Golden Joysticks

Another year has flown by and the Industry is preparing the fixed grins and doesn't-matter-whether-you-win-or-lose handshakes. And why? Because the Joysticks are nearly upon us. Of course, everyone knows that winning is all that matters, so you'll be keen to wield the not inconsiderable amount of power the voting form here gives you. Simply fill in your nominations, cut out the coupon and mail it to:

Golden Joysticks Nominations, ACE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Best Graphics 8-Bit: ....

Best Graphics 16-Bit: ....

Best Soundtrack 8-Bit: ....

Best Soundtrack 8-Bit: ....

Best Simulation 8-Bit: ....

Best Simulation 16-Bit: ....

Best Coin-Op Conversion 8-Bit: ....

Best Coin-Op Conversion 16-Bit: ....

Best Console Game: ....

Best PC Game: ....

Game of the Year 8-Bit: ....

Game of the Year 16-Bit: ....

Hardware Manufacturer of the Year: ....

Software House of the Year: ....

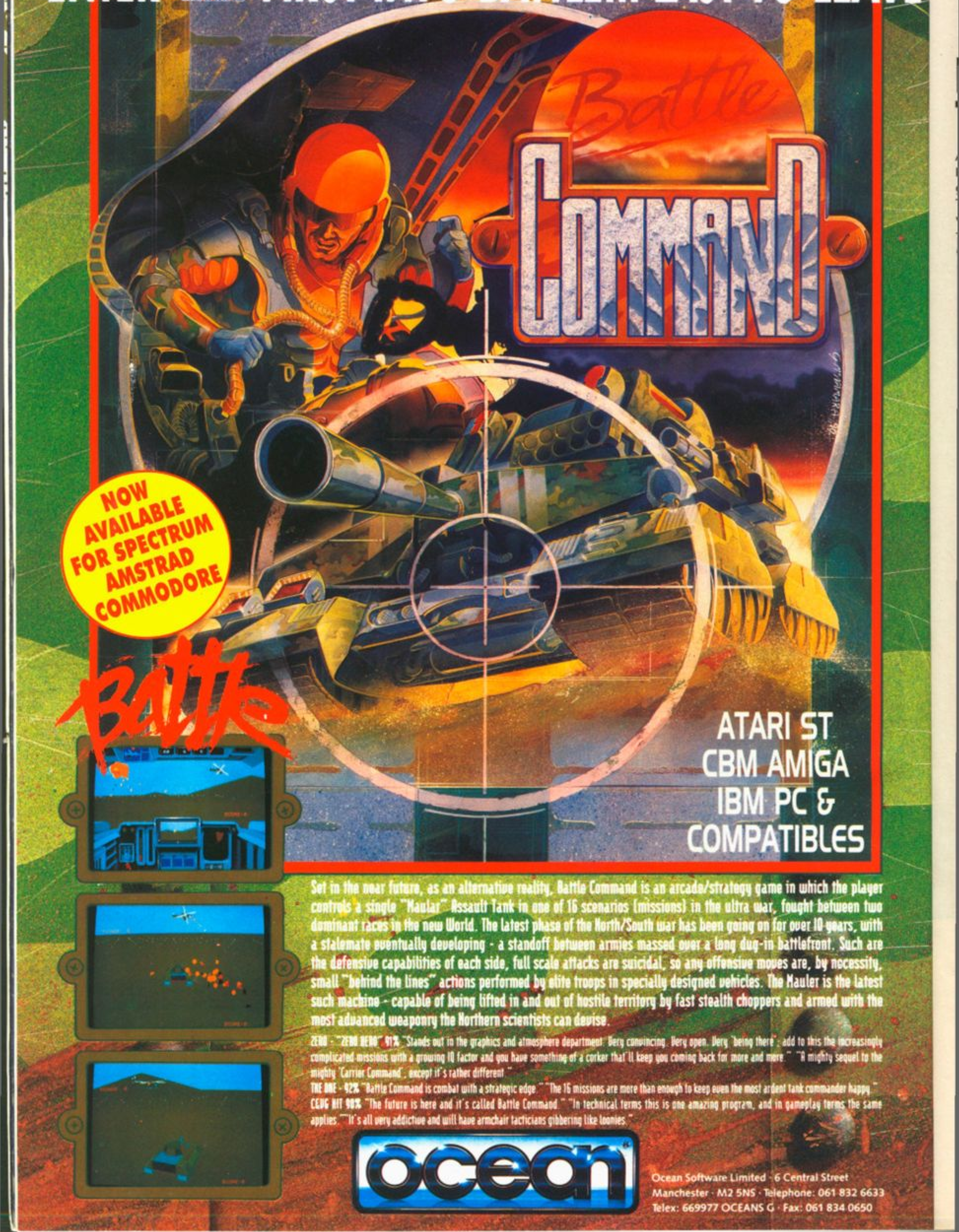
NAME: ....

ADDRESS: ....

....

....

ENTER FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE



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Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, Battle Command is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "Mauler" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war, fought between two dominant races in the new World. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefront. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

ZERO - "ZERO HERO" 91% "Stands out in the graphics and atmosphere department. Very convincing. Very open. Very 'being there': add to this the increasingly complicated missions with a growing IQ factor and you have something of a corker that'll keep you coming back for more and more." "A mighty sequel to the mighty 'Carrier Command', except it's rather different."

THE ONE - 92% "Battle Command is combat with a strategic edge." "The 16 missions are more than enough to keep even the most ardent tank commander happy."

C&VG HIT 90% "The future is here and it's called Battle Command." "In technical terms this is one amazing program, and in gameplay terms the same applies." "It's all very addictive and will have armchair tacticians gibbering like loonies."

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Letters

DON'T GO TO TOWNS

After spending many hours reading the December issue of ACE, I feel I must congratulate you on the Gamesworld article. This particular piece of the magazine was very well laid out, in.teresting, detailed and the artwork was excellent. Definitely one of the better articles to appear in ACE recently...

On the minus side, though, I think you are devoting too much of the magazine to technology out of reach of the average user. Machines such as the Neo Geo, the FM Towns, and the CDTV. Also, the new consoles seem to have, to an extent, replaced the 8-bit computer reviews. It's been quite a while since I saw a full-length C64 or CPC review in ACE.

Complaints aside, after over a year of regularly purchasing ACE, I still find it to be, without a doubt, the most colourful, most informative, and – above all – most enjoyable computer magazine available.

Piero Serra, Northampton

Cor! Warms the cockles of your heart! Keep the fiver and put it towards an FM Towns! And yes, we will be producing more features in the Gamesworld style, starting in the very next issue. You have been warned.

PULLING A FAST ONE

Like many readers of your magazine, I have noticed over the past few months the presence of the FAST advert in ACE. Whilst in no way defending the actions of software piracy, I find this worrying. The formation of FAST represents a virtual software cartel while there exists no – to my knowledge – organisation defending the interests of the games software consumer. Thus we can see, in an industry with a turnover in excess of 300 million pounds, substantial representation for the manufacturers and none for the consumers.

I propose the formation of a charter, by a neutral organisation, that would uphold the reputation of the software industry and defend the interests of the consumer. The charter could be subscribed to voluntarily by retailers and manufacturers, and the presence of the charter on their adverts could guarantee (for example) some of the following points:

1. Retailers must guarantee that consumers can see displays of software before buying.
2. A money-back guarantee if the packaging or the disks are faulty, or if the programme is bugged.

Packaging should display screen shots only if they apply to the specific version on sale.

These points would serve the interests of the industry.

Spencer Lewis, Romford

PS I find not only the presence but the tone of these adverts very disturbing.

Excellent idea, Spencer, and we're going to follow it up. See next month's issue for the results. It's worth pointing out, however, that consumers DO have some representation – through ACE. Many people think we just review games the way the manufacturers want us to, because we need the money they pay for advertising. There have been several instances in ACE's history where companies have withdrawn advertising because they did not agree with our reviews of their products. We always try to put the consumer's point of view first. Incidentally, you're not the only person to find the FAST ads disturbing, although see Blitter End in this issue for an Advertising Standards Authority judgement.

DEMO DISKS

When I played Knights of the Crystallion I found that I had bought, in my eyes, a rather average game consisting of several ordinary components with, admittedly, some very original graphics. Of course, there must be many people who saw it quite differently as all its high ratings by different computer magazines shows. The thing I want to emphasise is that even if a game is highly rated by many people that doesn't mean to say that I will like it too.

What I want to suggest is that publishers offer playable demo disks of their games for between £1 and £3 so the consumer could check out the game without risking a lot. If I liked it, I could then buy the full price product with confidence.

Ann-Miriam Maczewski, Germany

Psygnosis actually are in the process of doing this with Lemmings, and will be charging 99p for the disk. The company are very pleased with the result so far, so I expect we will see more of this sort of thing, but it's worth pointing out that some people claim the disk has the opposite effect – having played the five levels included, they lose the impetus to pay for the whole product, although thinking it is an excellent game. It's very difficult deciding how much to 'give away' in this fashion.

VR HEALTH WARNING

I think that VR will be the biggest leap in advanced computer entertainment since the introduction of the computer itself! But whilst drooling over the possibilities of VR games, something occurred to me – something which currently I have heard nothing about, and that was the dangerous aspect of virtual reality. Would immersing your senses into a completely new and realistic environment mean that the user experiences the same effects as they would if the situation was physically real?

Imagine playing the latest VR RPG. You're walking along a dark passage when a huge grotesque monster jumps out and proceeds to attack you. If the graphics and atmosphere were realistic enough, would you really feel scared – to death maybe?

Are there any doctors out there who can clarify the situation?

Michael Webster, Beverley

A Doctor Writes: Yes, severe shock can be dangerous whatever the cause or context if you have a weak heart, and stress/strain will aggravate most physical infirmities. This has already happened with a boxing arcade game in Japan, where one man is reported to have had a heart attack while hitting the 'pads' used to control the game. On the other hand, sudden death in a VR RPG when confronted with a 30 ft high purple ur-parrot featuring 128 fully articulated different jaws, an insatiable urge to mate with humans, and a whole battery of incomprehensible instruments of torture may, possibly, be the best thing that could happen to you.

YES, IT'S A CONSOLE!

I feel angry, nay incensed, by Douglas Inness' comments with regard to the Megadrive. How can people be so narrow minded? Console owners seem to be continually on the receiving end of criticism where the merits and capabilities of the their machines are concerned and also seem to regarded as poor, inferior individuals who only want to plug away at a joypad on the latest arcade conversion. Mr Inness obviously hasn't seen or played Phantasy Star 2 or Herzog Zwei (we don't all overdose on shoot-em-ups or platform games, you know).

But getting back to his letter, I paid £265 for my Megadrive with 6 games which I think is better than paying at least an extra £100 for an Amiga or ST that has facilities I most definitely wouldn't use (such as graphics, sound, and business applications)...

You're quite right, Mr Inness, the Megadrive does lack a keyboard. That's because it's a CONSOLE. But, sarcasm aside, a disk drive, keyboard, graphics tablet, modem unit, and CDROM drive are all on the way, which opens the door for tremendous possibilities. But why do parents always want educational justification when deciding whether or not to buy a console or a computer. If all you want to do is play games, buy a console. You're wasting your money and the machine's capabilities if you buy a computer for that reason alone.

If paying £33 for Populous (which is what it costs where I get my stuff from) means no more faulty discs and extraneous loading times for an identical Amiga conversion, then it's certainly going to be a far more enjoyable experience.

J.P.Roche, Altrincham

I think that computer owners are understandably sensitive about consoles because they think that these machines might render their own machines obsolete. This is not the case. As long as magazines like ACE are around (and we plan to be around for a long, long time) we will continue to support and reflect the computer gamer. There are good reasons for getting both a computer and a console. The first has slightly cheaper software (not everyone can afford the luxury of instant loading) and greater functionality, the second is more convenient for dedicated gamesplaying. As we always say, go for both! But at least get the one you want and don't feel dictated to by fashion...

HELP!

I am one very sad and disappointed mother! My son is severely disabled and his computer is an absolute lifeline. He has had a BBC computer since he was about 7 years old and the programmes were excellent, helping him with reading, writing, and thinking. However, he came home from school one day with 'Amiga madness' and eventually the BBC was out and the Amiga in.

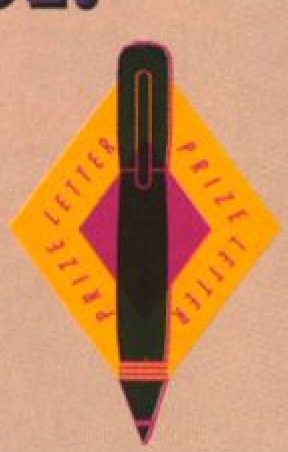
To me, it appears that he has swapped a boxful of really entertaining BBC disks for a boxful of absolutely mindless arcade rubbish, half of which move so fast that he's no idea what's going on. I didn't know what a mouse was until the Amiga arrived, and how I wish that I still didn't! It's useless for Martin and flies off the table when he tries to use it, due to his clumsy spastic movements. I have never seen Martin use the keyboard with any of his Amiga games. It's just whoosh, bang whallop, here we go again on the jolly old joystick.

Please, please help someone before I'm driven mad by the screeching brakes driving round the never ending bends. Is there somewhere some sensible software for the Amiga to suit a child aged 12-14 years old which requires the use of the keyboard and the brain?

Marion Haywood, Torquay

First, you can rest assured that there is lots of Amiga software that fulfils the needs you speak of. Flight simulators, tank simulators, strategy games, chess programs...the

VIRTUAL CURSE!



In issue 40 of your excellent magazine, there is an article on virtual reality. It is good to see what is essentially an entertainment magazine cover the new technology that will undoubtedly affect computer entertainment in the future. However, I feel there are some important points which were absent from your feature.

I am a 21 year old student of computer technology and have enjoyed computer games for over 8 years, although I now use my computer for WP, programming, music etc. With this experience I know how some games (even on the old Spectrum 48K) can totally engross a person in their reality.

For example, I am currently enjoying Captive on the ST. This is a thrilling game with all the ingredients necessary to capture the attention (pun intended) and it does this with a basic Atari ST, 2D graphics, and mono sound (on my STFM anyway). Imagine a VR game based on the same concept and design but with realistic 3D graphics and all the features that VR can give the player. I, for one, would never be able to stop playing such an astonishing game.

Even now, there are parents who feel that their children spend far too much time on their computers, to the exclusion of other social activities, such as other children and sports. There are instances of video game addiction that have led those children to steal from parents and beg from strangers to feed this addiction. In my opinion, the situation can only get worse as VR technology becomes more and more sophisticated.

I offer a scenario set in the year 2020.

You have just purchased the latest auto-sensing VR megamachine (AVR) with free Wild West simulation program. The new machine is an all-in-one module which fits snugly over your eyes. It can sense your every movement from the neural patters signalling your body to move. It feeds the simulation directly into your brain by means of nerve induction. You stand outside and place it over your eyes.

You are suddenly standing on the wooden walkway of an old west town. You look down to see yourself dressed in leather trousers and high boots, shirt, and leather waistcoat. The clothes feel real, the material itchy, the boots soft and comfortable. At your waist is a thick hide belt and hanging at your side is a gun, an old Smith and Wesson.

You look around and all the shops and roads you left behind in the real world are reproduced in the simulation. You start walking down the pathway.

You just passed a clothes shop that, in reality, sold nothing but the latest, brightest fashions – what you see is a dusty old wooden store that sells worn leather riding pants and tough cotton shirts. Where the bar on your left that, in reality, had a pink neon sign, where the chromers hang out, is in reality, you see old double swing doors of a saloon, inside which sit some of the meanest, toughest cowboys of the West.

Every shop in this bustling city transmits its name and merchandise, so the AVR can transform this data to an image which you can see, hear, tough, smell, and taste.

The AVR has a small radar that can detect the smallest objects. For every man the radar detects, you see a man packing a gun and wearing old-style western clothes. For every woman, you see a lady in a big, stiff dress and matching bonnet. For every automobile, a horse-drawn carriage.

The radar detects a gap in the real people who surround you and the AVR decides to offer you an encounter. In that encounter, you see the dreaded Billy the Kid strutting down the earthen path...You decide to make the world a better place and take this sucker out. As he approaches, you draw and shoot, the gun feels real in your hand, the acrid smoke stings your nostrils, and Billy lies at your feet, dead.

You rip the AVR from your sweat-beaded forehead and look down at the concrete pathway – to see nothing. This is where Billy lay, but now there is nothing. With your heart beating, you smile and slowly lift the AVR to your eyes and reenter the Virtual Reality...

This scenario sounds implausible and I admit it is a pessimistic view of the use of the technology, but you have only to look to see how far computers have developed in the last twenty years to imagine how far they can 'theoretically' develop in the next thirty.

The problem of addiction taken to its limit would be a person who would never remove the AVR and would actually LIVE in the virtual reality, waiting for the next real-life simulation to hit the market. If forced back into the real world, the addict would suffer terrible withdrawal and deep depression and finally require psychiatric help to become a real person again.

This is a very, very cynical view, but it is one which must be considered alongside the development of sophisticated VR technology.

The other side of the coin where VR is concerned is in its use for giving the blind or dear or otherwise disabled people an image of the real world that they would otherwise would not have.

Imagine an AVR for the blind. It would receive data from the shops and radar (and any other theoretical sources) and convert it into an image which is fed directly to the brain, giving the user the ability to interact with the real world as never before. This is only one of the many good uses the technology could be used for.

I have tried to point out the good and bad side of VR and I hope to have invoked some thought on the subject by other readers. Personally, I cannot wait for the first affordable VR games machine to be released as it will be a real landmark in games technology and game experience.
Peter Green, Huddersfield

We've given your letter the prize not because we agree with your apocalyptic warnings of a world of VR zombies, but because of your imaginative depiction of the possibilities. It sounds great! A few points...Every technological advance breeds casualties. There are currently millions of people dying from overeating. Blame it on enhanced flavouring? ...Children stole and begged from their parents to go to the movies during the depression...The threat to the young can be controlled by legislation...The risk of psychological dependence on VR would be substantially less when it is seen (as it will be) in the context of the futuristic consumer society in which it emerges, which will undoubtedly offer many other, equally compelling diversions....and, finally, the use to which we put technology is in our own hands. It's YOU who wanted to blow Billy away. It is not technology that we should be afraid of, but ourselves – and there's no escape from that.

list is endless. Just go to a good independent computer dealer, explain the problem and ask his advice. If he hasn't got time for you, shake the dust from your shoes and try somewhere else. The mouse problem is an interesting one – we've passed your letter onto Commodore themselves to see if they can help – a track ball might be a minor improvement, and there are one or two 'complex' joysticks on the market with multi-button control. Finally, perhaps you shouldn't worry yourself too much about the screaming of tyres – your son may be finding that this new type of software is a valuable means of letting off steam which might otherwise get bottled up. – once that's done, I'm sure he'll enjoy something more serious, and there's lots about.

NO MORE WAITERS!

I have decided to get a Megadrive and not a Famicom for three simple reasons.

1. I have a Game Boy and all good Nintendo licenses will be released for it.
2. As far as I have heard, You cannot play NES games on the Super Famicom, whereas Megadrive owners have all the old Sega favourites.
3. I don't think I can stand anything else with 'Super' or 'Mario' in its title.

David Hamilton, Glasgow

I wouldn't count on either 1 or 2, but sympathise with 3!

THE MONEY PIT?

Dear ACE,

I'm a Megadrive owner, but I feel my query probably applies to every console/computer owner. Put basically it's this: Why is software so expensive? The 16-bit computer owners have to pay around £25 for their software, I have to pay around £30 (I appreciate that my software is going to be a little more pricey due to the fact that it's more expensive to produce a chip-based cart than a mass-duplicated disc) and other console owners have to pay fairly substantial sums too (although the latest Japanese 'grey' software will naturally be highly priced because of import costs).

These figures seem too high to me. The 8-bit computer owners pay around £15 for their disc-based software - a full £10 less than disc-based 16-bit games. Usually the reason given for this price difference is increased 'development costs' for the big boys. Can this really be true?

In the early days of 16-bit computers everyone was assured that once the ST and Amiga started selling in volume the price of software would inevitably drop. It hasn't, even though these computers now dominate the computer market. Similar assurances are made to console owners who complain about the prices of carts. Are these promises going to be hollow too?

I'm writing to you in the hope that you can shed some light on just what happens to all my hard-saved wonga when I buy a new game. Sorry for being such a 'moaning minnie'!

Sam Theal, Harrow

The old 'Why is software so expensive?' chestnut has been roasting on the brazier for as long as I can remember. Back in the mid-80s there was near rioting amongst Spectrum owners when they heard that Ultimate Play the Game (now Rare, console developers) were upping the price of their games from £5.99 to a whopping £9.99(!!). Now, of course, nearly every major Spectrum release costs that much (although I'm sure many Spectrum owners would welcome a return to those 'Good Old Days'!). However, that's by-the-by. In next month's issue of ACE we'll be answering all your queries and more, when we explain exactly where the money goes when you buy a game. I think you'll be surprised by what we reveal!

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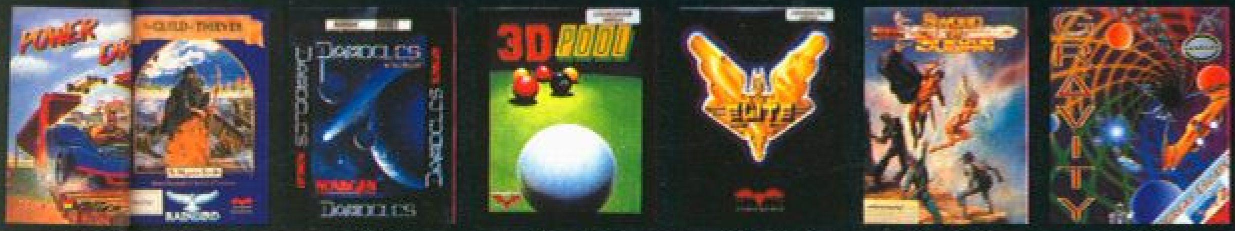

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SNK
Home Entertainment, Inc.
BIGGER

Show people: This anonymous character may simply be a perfectly normal American

The SNK wowed US software developers. Practically every programmer we met wanted to develop for it, but practically no-one was going to. The reason? The exorbitant prices. One developer claimed that 'The SNK shows that we've reached the end of the line as far as silicon game systems are concerned. We just can't afford to go any further until we get either cheaper CD storage or memory prices collapse.'

Insanity USA

ACE hits Las Vegas and then storms down through California, bringing you eleven pages of exclusive reports from the land of virtual reality, hypersex, and hardcore games technology.
The insanity starts here...

DAT (digital audio tape) still hasn't made it really big, but these portable DAT units from Casio could help make a difference. Like Sony's recently released (and smaller) DAT Walkman, the machines are equipped with SCMS (Serial Copy Management System) that limits direct recording from compact disks to first generation copies (one-time recording only). Something of a cosmetic measure, we reckon, but it appears to have pacified the CD manufacturers just enough to make the DAT market a viable proposition. The DA-7 features almost unholy levels of performance compared to most analogue systems: 10Hz-20kHz frequency response and 90dB SN ratio for the techno-pornographers amongst you. THD is 0.008% and wow/flutter is less than measurable.

Show people: this delightful pair spent the whole show playing Pit Warrior. Later Big Boy tried to engineer a confrontation with the Ultimate Warrior, but was shepherded away by anxious security guards.

Yes, it's a volcano, erupting only a few yards from the street. Sending rivers of flame across an artificial lake, it rears to its full height of, well, about fifty feet. Passers-by pay practically no attention at all. This, you see, is Las Vegas.

Yes, you can have your double chocolate double malted with whipped fresh cream and butter pecan ice-cream and yes, those are real white tigers in the hotel lobby where you have just won $500 on a 5c slot and yes, you are screaming with excitement as 2000 coins vomit out of the machine. Passers-by pay practically no attention at all. Las Vegas, remember?

This, however, is a small plastic talking watch that no-one in their right mind would pay 5p for. The passers-by are absolutely fascinated. They're practically killing each other to get a closer look. The man with the watches has the air of a conjurer materialising rabbits with an IQ of 150 and the ability to digest nuclear waste. People are taking him extremely seriously.

That's CES...

THE SHOW OF SHOWS

CES, in case you didn't know, happens twice a year – at Vegas in January and Chicago in June. It is not to be confused with our own Computer Entertainment Show that takes place in London in September. CES is about Consumer Electronics in its widest sense. A series of vast halls, pavilions, and hotel lobbies house everything from computer games to camcorders, from ear-blasting in-car audio to mind-numbing pornographic videos. If you can buy it and it conducts electricity (or plugs into something that does), you can find it here.

It's beyond any mortal's capabilities to give you a comprehensive round-up of what went down at this year's show. On these three pages we take a whistle-stop tour through a whole range of widgets and topics that you may find compelling, irrelevant, or downright absurd. Elsewhere in this issue you can check out some of the games software we tracked down and there are also additional features on CD software, the latest news on virtual reality, and console development technology at Electronic Arts' San Mateo office. Enjoy...

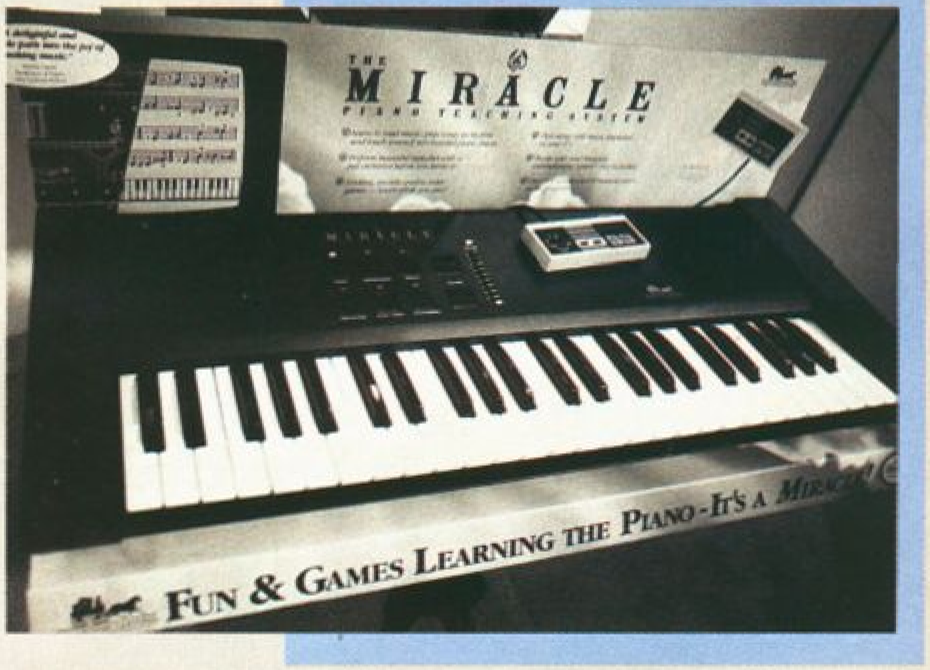
CONSOLES ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Video games have been getting quite a pasting in the States as American youth succumbs to the malevolent hypnotic power of 28 million Nintendo Entertainment Systems. Horror stories abound in the media about successfully suicidal Zelda freaks and mini-Marios knocking their heads against brick walls, so now the industry is fighting back with applications that should earn parental respect. The Miracle is currently top of the list...

It's a neat package, featuring a 49 full-size, velocity sensitive keyboard, 128 digital sounds and effects, 16 note polyphony, and a multitimbral MIDI specification. The secret, however, is the NES cart that comes with it – containing a graded series of over 200 piano lessons, presented in formats ranging from video game-style exercises to standard musical notation and theory.

The Miracle keyboard is significant because it shows what can be done when a computer system achieves mass market penetration in the way that the NES has done. Suddenly all kinds of applications that would previously have been too costly to produce can get onto the market by borrowing processing power and VDU presentation from the NES. Stand by for even more add-ons of this nature if the Super Famicom, which has better interface capability, achieves similar market penetration.

The Miracle keyboard: plug in and play along



Nintendo dominated an entire pavilion at CES. With US sales now topping 28 million units, there is a Nintendo console in one of every three US homes...

DRIVE BY WIRE

Blaupunkt's Travelpilot uses CD's to store comprehensive map information that links in with wheel sensor input to tell a driver exactly where he is and how he can reach his destination. Pioneer unveiled a similar system that uses satellite navigation signals rather than wheel sensors. Both systems cost around $3500.

Game Boy products filled the Nintendo pavilion. Info Genius had the neat idea of designing a Personal Organiser cart with battery-backed up RAM. The only problem was the fiddly data entry using the rocker switch and buttons to locate and enter letters.

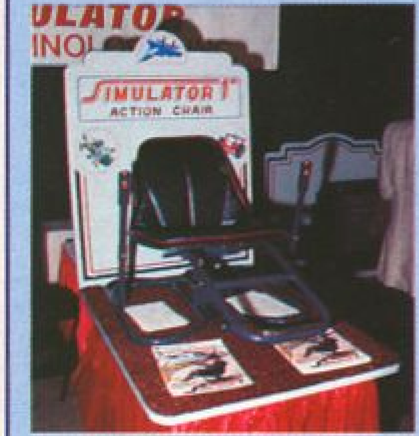
Show people: UK's Incentive boss Ian Andrew found himself an angel (we promised not to tell his wife)

Show people: the Ultimate Warrior, he world's most famous body-slammer, who had the longest queue of the show as punters waited at the Acclaim stand for their signed photos

IN CONTROL

The games at CES were, for the most part, predictable and uninspired. Not so, however, the devices on offer for controlling them. Surprisingly, there was nothing on show in the 'cyberspace' user interface categories of body suits, datagloves, or eyeball tracking devices. Instead, we had sticks, chairs, and even a speech recognition device – the Voice Master Key system, which gives you vocal control of your lasers (or your spreadsheet). Currently only available for the PC, VMK will recognise up to 64 voice commands which can then be applied to user-defined keyboard sequences. Since these sequences can load in other files, the possible applications are endless. Now you can just say 'Thanks, John' and hey presto! Word processor loaded, standard thank you letter printed out...

Turtle power in the palm of your hand


SIMULATOR 1
ACTION CHAIR

The Action Chair and somewhat similar competitor Hot Seat both aimed at giving 'seat-of-the-pants' control of your game or flight sim. Elsewhere we had the usual yokes and multi-button joysticks.

A transparent marketing gimmick from one mouse manufacturer

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This charming device says 'F***k you!' and other endearing phrases in a tinny voice. It will cost you $19.95 retail and is the sort of thing you buy when you know you've got to buy something for somebody and don't particularly care what it is. Enough said, in more ways than one.

FRIGE-RAIDER SECURITY SYSTEMS
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IT REALLY WORKS!
CATCH THE FRIDGE RAIDERS!

Many Americans have a problem: their bodies are too big. Answer, an electronic alarm fitted to the fridge door.

The Steadicam Jr: slick and oh so smooth...

Just as Casio have persevered with all manner of miniaturised watch technologies over the last few years, so Franklin have battled on in the electronic reference widget market. Not content with spelling machines and thesauri, they've now squeezed the Concise Columbia Encyclopaedia into silicon. All entries are cross-referenced and it will even stage trivia quizzes. And if that's impressive, try the Spanish Master – 250000 words from Collins Dictionary in both English and Spanish, featuring a chip set that actually says the words so you can hear how they're pronounced.

STAR OF THE SHOW

It's a bit depressing to have to announce that the most stunning exhibit at CES didn't have anything to do with computer games at all, but with the rapidly exploding video camera market.

As soon as you abandon the limitations of the tripod and start composing dynamic shots with either a cine camera or a video camera, you come up against camera shake. Professionals use a device called the Steadicam which employs a complex system of counterweights and harnesses to allow a trained operator complete freedom of movement but without any discernible judder on-screen. You can follow Warren Beatty from one bedroom to another, up and down stairs, in and out of cars, without so much as a jiggle.

Now the makers of Steadicam have produced the Steadicam JR, an astonishingly simple hand-held device that does the same thing for personal 8mm camcorders. You mount your camcorder on the tripod-style platform, hold the entire assembly by a comfortable grip using one hand (it's remarkably light), and use the built-in high intensity 3.5" LCD monitor instead of the viewfinder. With your other hand, you can manipulate the camera to pan and tilt as you move around. The cost: $595, and even at that price it has to be an essential purchase for every user of 8mm or lightweight camcorders.

Also on show was an ingenious device called 'In the Picture' that allows you to track action automatically with your camcorder. Simply attach a small clip-on transmitter to the object or person you want 'in the picture', mount your camera on the unit, and it will then track the person/object in all directions. Great for filming tennis, with you on the court instead of behind the camera.

Hi! We're the Hot Tot Robots from The Robot Factory in Colorado. We can talk; move forward, backward, left and right; our heads rotate, and we have synchronised, voice activated mouth movement. You can control us with a cassette or by a radio link. We cost $4295 each. Have a nice day!

Show people: disgusting goings-on in the adult video lobby.

NEW LYNX IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

The Lynx can now be purchased in America for the equivalent of £45. Makes you sick, doesn't it? But this isn't the only surprise in the ongoing battle of the handhelds...

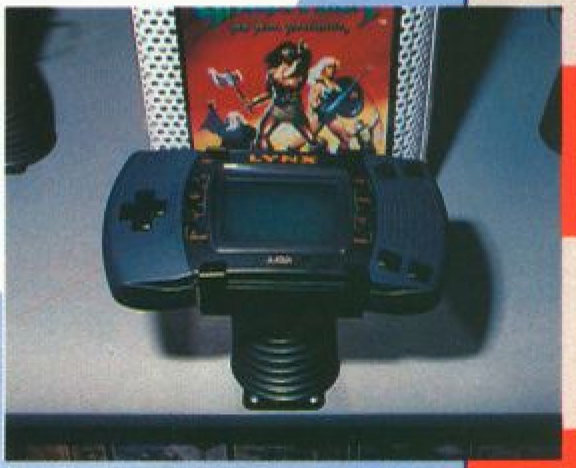
First, the Lynx really has upset the applecart, and not just because of that new low price and redesigned body-shell. While everyone had fallen into the habit of ignoring just about everything Atari, market research suddenly revealed that Lynx sales in the US had topped an astonishing 200,000 machines – more than the Sega Megadrive or PC Engine. Now at $99, the Lynx has become overnight the handheld to watch in the States – and that could have serious implications for the UK handheld market too.

UK Lynx fans will still have to pay far more for the unit than their US counterparts, so expect a burgeoning grey market in the machines. Expect also to see a growing software base – traditionally the area where the Lynx has suffered seriously in comparison with the monochrome Game Boy.

Sega, meanwhile, got a warm reception for their Game Gear and the NEC Turbographx, although looking pretty, seemed destined for third place in this particular struggle.

Lucasfilm software supremo A.J. Redmer made an interesting point about handhelds: 'People are only just beginning to realise the implications of the smaller screens,' he said, 'and one thing that's emerging is that conventional video game designs don't work so well on the small format. For that reason, both the Sega Game Gear – which borrows heavily from the Master system market – and the Turbographx, which runs PC Engine software – are losing out, because the software that worked so well on their full-size counterparts hasn't translated effectively onto the small screen. The Lynx and the Game Boy, on the other hand, both demanded that programmers started from scratch and as a result the software is much more impressive. From a programming point of view, the Lynx is excellent and with this surprising news about sales, I think it's definitely the machine to watch.'

Who would have thought it? Looks as if the Lynx may make it to the big time after all...



The new Lynx design. Smarter, a touch smaller, and a lot cheaper at $99

Sega's GameGear was very popular, but the new cheap Lynx could knock it for six

Computer technology hasn't hit train sets yet, but top-of-the-range manufacturer LGB reckons it's only a year or so away

TURBO
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NEC's portable - software compatibility, but some titles don't work nearly as well on the smaller screen format and the machine is still struggling seriously in the States and Japan

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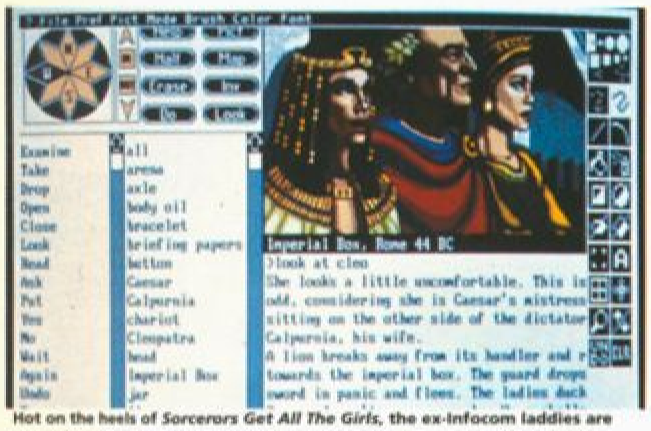
CESoft Spots

Nintendo dominated the CES software scene with a mass of (for the most part) mediocre Game Boy releases, but ACE correspondents still managed to uncover a few nuggets of soft, solid gold...

Wing Commander was one of the most talked-about games at the show, having earned huge respect among American developers. Not surprising, then, that the sequel, Vengeance of the Kilrathi, attracted a lot of attention.

Scheduled for a spring release, the game features 'extensive' speech synthesis as the original storyline continues with 30 characters, new graphics (both VGA and EGA), and an action-related sound track. Set six years after the original scenario, you endure humiliation as the result of a Kilrathi plot and must start the game in disgrace before working your way up through the ranks all over again.

Origin are already working on a third generation of *Wing Commander* titles, scheduled for completion at the end of this year and featuring, amongs other things, fully textured graphics – yet another sign that the computer games market and the professional high-end graphics developers are moving closer together. Let's hope someone buys us the 386 PC technology that will enable us to run it!



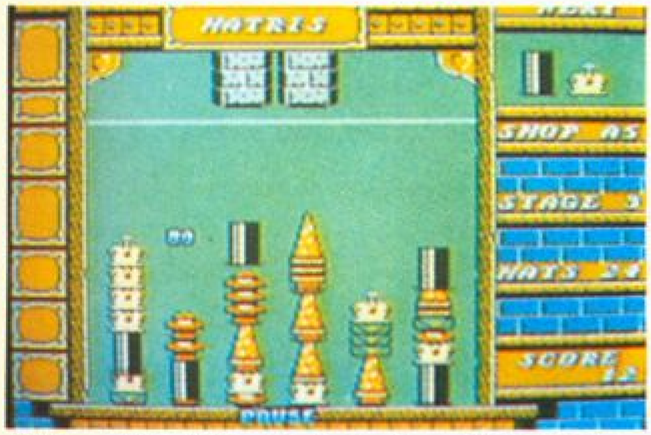
Imperial Box, Rome 44 BC

>look at cleo

She looks a little uncomfortable. This is odd, considering she is Caesar's mistress sitting on the other side of the dictator Calpurnia, his wife.

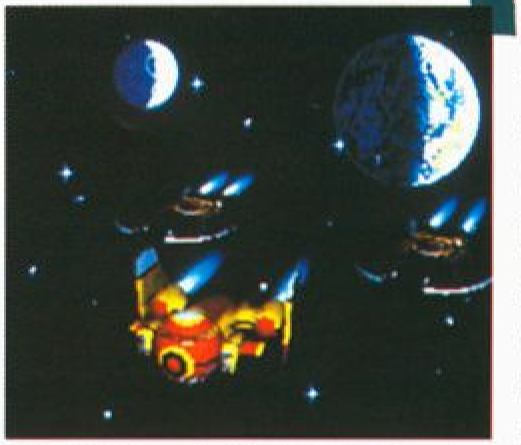
A lion breaks away from its handler and r towards the imperial box. The guard drops sword in panic and flees. The ladies duck

Hot on the heels of *Sorcerors Get All The Girls*, the ex-Infocom laddies are now hard at work on *Timequest* from Robert 'Arthur' Bates. Stand by for the ACE review...

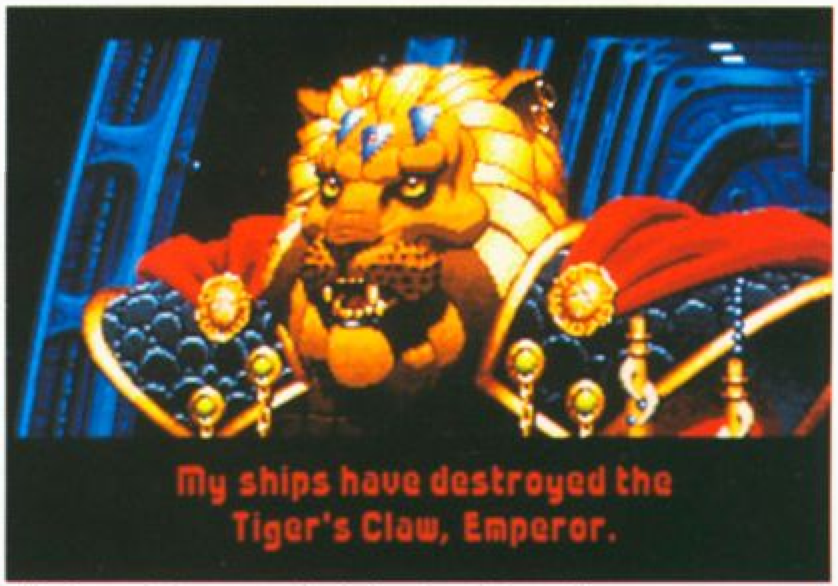


Hatris from Bullet Proof Software for the Game Boy and NES. Prettier than *Tetris*, but vulnerable to 'more-of-the-same' criticism...

Meanwhile, *WC* for the Amiga is still under development – a tough programming challenge for converters Mindscape given the amount of data involved but currently scheduled for Xmas 91 release. '*Wing Commander* for the Amiga must do for the Amiga what it did for the PC,' says author Chris Roberts, adding that, '...the one last missing missing ingredient in the current formula is compact disk. CD will only improve our ability to compete with movies. I can't wait!'. Both *WC2* and *Ultima VII* will be available in CD-ROM versions.



Future *Wing Commander* titles should benefit from the new technology being developed by Origin, featuring textured surface details and light-source shading



My ships have destroyed the Tiger's Claw, Emperor.

Wing Commander 2 – you get synchronised speech synthesis as well as the 256 colour VGA graphics. Unfortunately, you need a high-end PC to enjoy them.

ULTIMA VII

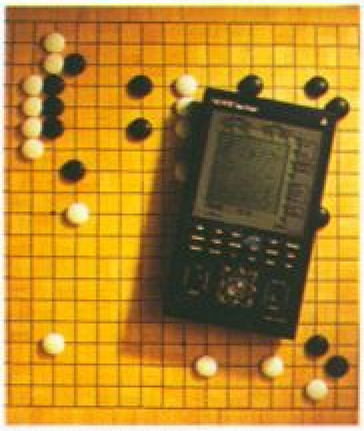
Richard 'Lord British' Garriott is hard at work with the Origin team on the successor to *Ultima VI*. 'Almost unbelievably, he claims that the new program will be even more of an advance over its predecessor than *UVI* was over *UV*.

'*UVII* will feature the same core routines as *Wing Commander*, abandoning tile graphics for the first time and presenting a single scale universe,' promised Richard. Even bigger changes are promised in the user interface, which does away with complex command input altogether. '*UVI* had two word commands,' says Richard, 'but you could say that *UVII* has no commands at all!'. Sounds like the Ultima series is moving even closer to more mainstream 'arcade-adventure' style presentation.

An even bigger change is due to take place in the way you control your party. 'There will be no control over other party members,' Lord British reveals, 'The game takes place in real time, so there will be no time to command your party anyway. They will all act intelligently and independently.'

Origin are also at work on an unspecified driving sim, featuring light-source shading, texture mapping, and 3D terrains. 'I've never seen a car game I've believed in,' complains Chris Roberts, 'We need to come up with something that really FEELS like a car.' Stand by for more news in forthcoming issues of ACE.

F117A Nighthawk from Microprose looked set to continue the great 'Prose tradition of combat flight sims ▼



Nemesis' reputable Go software took over fifteen years to develop and is now available in Mac and PC versions. The company have also released this very neat portable version, featuring an attractive LCD display and dedicated controls

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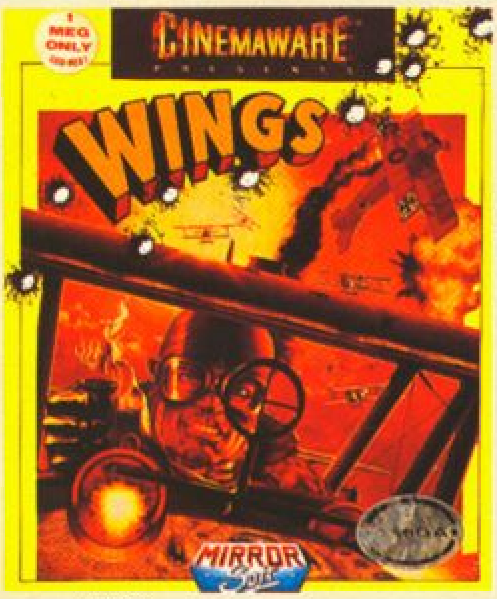
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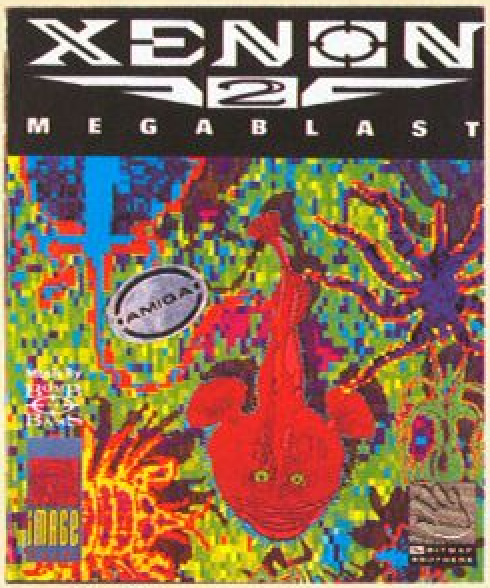
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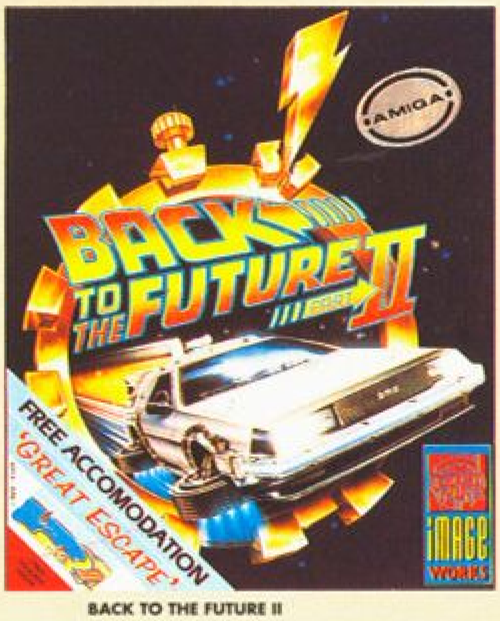
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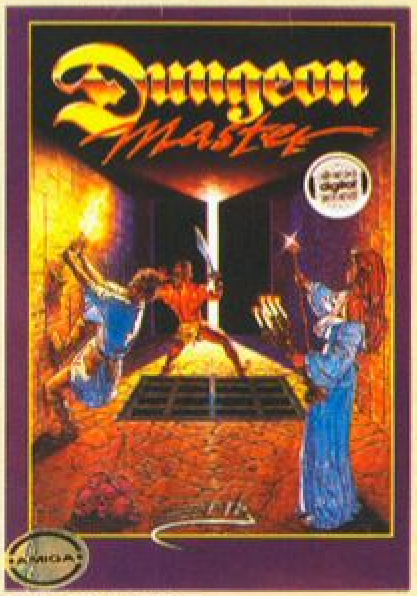

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virtual SEX!

Virtual reality systems are entering areas of entertainment that other technologies simply cannot reach. ACE jacks into Californian cyberspace with news of the latest VR developments

Angel Studios are one of the few state-of-the-art computer graphics companies hell-bent on giving us all a good time....not content with their superlative animations for film and television, nor with the development of their own powerful virtual environment software Scenix, they're now branching out into arcade entertainment and virtual sex.

Virtual sex?!

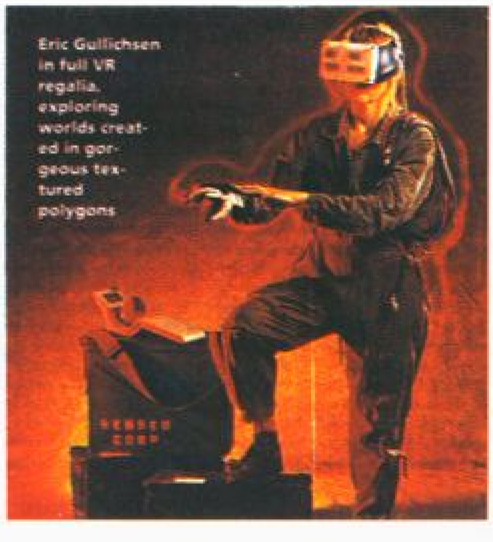
Correct. No less than seven minutes of it. Angel are working on a multi-million dollar movie that takes a futuristic look at one of the more exotic applications of virtual reality – making love using 'virtual bodies'. Although it might sound a bit on the Soho side, the storyboards manage to combine technical authenticity with serious speculation about the practical implications of a world dominated by virtual reality systems.

'We're very committed to the idea of entertainment and VR,' said Angel's director of computer simulation and software development, 'and apart from the film we currently have two projects under development in the arcade field (see photos).' To date, most of Angel's work has been in the TV and film animation world but they've also done some '...defense work – which has been very useful for developing routines that could be used in games.'

Check out the pics on this page and don't miss our forthcoming major feature on Angel Studio's film and arcade developments.

To produce their state-of-the-art animations – this was produced for San Diego's Sea World complex – Angel Studios use Silicon Graphics equipment giving them 17 million colours and a resolution of 4000*4000. Graphics are either modelled in software or scanned in from photographic originals and then re-processed. Artwork is input either by scanning or using a digitising tablet with a .001" resolution. During animation, multiple bit-planes are used for scaling rather than software scaling routines, giving the maximum possible degree of realism.

Angel Studios are now branching out into the entertainment field. They have three projects under development – a film about virtual reality (that's a sketch from the storyboard at bottom right) and two arcade developments featuring hydraulic frames. Stand by for a full scale feature on these, currently under preparation at the ACE Synapse Centre


Eric Gullichsen in full VR regalia, exploring worlds created in gorgeous textured polygons

PUTTING ON THE FEEL

It's 7.15pm and the campus of Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, is closed down for the night. Surrounded by dark alleyways leading off into areas of impenetrable shadow, all you have to guide you is a rumour that pioneering VR company Sense8 are to demonstrate their latest DVI-based virtual reality system in building 420-041. This building could be anywhere within several square miles of Freddy Krueger-infested cul-de-sacs, corridors, and classrooms. Your interest in new technology is hitting an all-time low...

Half an hour later, thanks to chance encounters with two apparently normal denizens of darkness, your interest in new technology is not only revived but heading for the roof. You're in a small lecture theatre and there on stage Ken Pimentel of Intel is demonstrating the fruits of his latest project – a multimedia virtual reality system based around Sense8's *WorldTool* virtual world construction software, two DVI boards, a CD-ROM drive, 25mHz 486 processor, 320Mb hard disk, VGA graphics, and additional VPL hardware.

The excitement is all due to the massive graphic enhancement of virtual realities possible using this new system – which is also far cheaper than other set-ups. This improvement is all due to combining the graphics handling power of Sense8's *WorldTool* software with the processing power of DVI. Using this system means that virtual worlds

VIRTUAL PROBLEMS

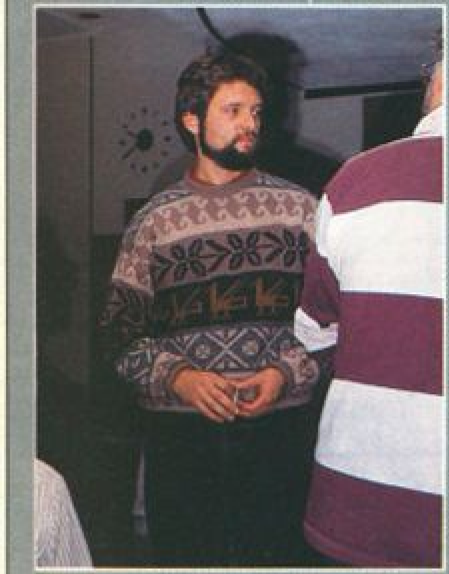
Ken Pimentel of Intel reckons that despite all the excitement, there are still some very serious obstacles to overcome in the quest for the ultimate virtual experience.

● Resolution
Current VR headsets are geared to work at a resolution of 360*240 and the display is magnified up to 3 times. The pixels are therefore 'enormous. We need at least a resolution of 1024*780'.

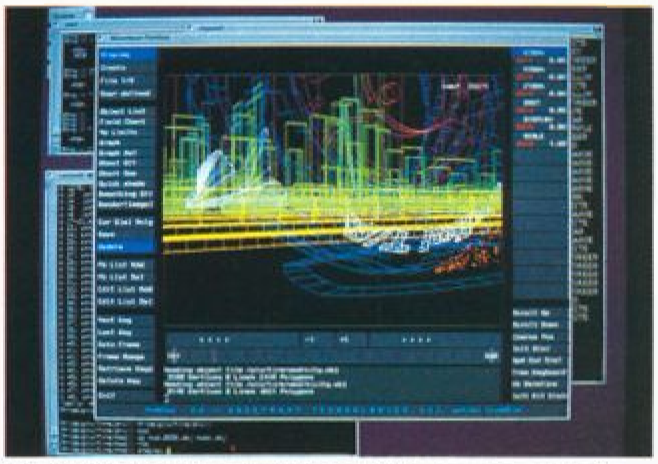
● Cost of Headsets
Currently £3K-£4K. Need to be less than £500.

● Human factors
This encompasses several different but related difficulties: the weight of the headsets, for example, and tripping up over cables. Another major problem is 'reality switching' – the user is so immersed in his virtual experience that actually operating the equipment becomes a problem.

● Position sensing
Most current systems are expensive, of limited range, and sensitive to 'noise'

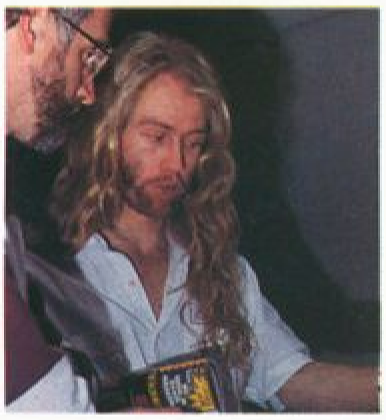


Ken Pimentel, who's been working for the last six months on the development of the Intel/Sense8 VR system, still sees serious technical challenges that need to be overcome in VR

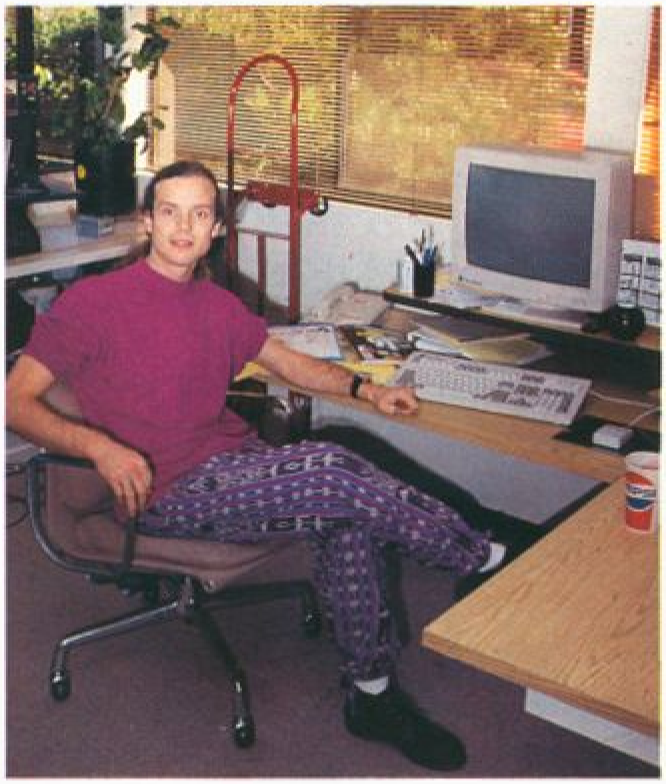


One of Michael's most important utilities, *Keyframe*, running on Angel's Silicon Graphics equipment

Angel use real-life models as the basis for facial animation. Gridlines are drawn onto the model's face and used as the basis for polygonisation during the modelling process. The human face often requires as many as 15000 polygons for accurate simulation and animation



Eric Gullichsen of Sense8, clutching a copy of ACE, and pointing out some of the finer attributes of the new DVI/Sense8 VR system



Brad Hunt, Director of Computer Simulation and Software Development for Angel Studios. His credits include work on *The Last Starfighter* and contributions to the special effects in *2010*

The Spaceball is just one of the control devices accepted by the Sense8 system. Useful for VR exploration, it's a 6D unit, giving control over X,Y,Z co-ordinates and pitch, roll, and yaw

need no longer be composed of flat-shaded polygons that look like something out of a mildly enhanced version of Battlezone. Instead, you can now see the details of your surroundings vividly brought to life using real-world textures.

'DVI offers some important features for virtual environments', points out Ken, 'First, it gives us full motion video at 30 frames a second and full stereo sound. It can also combine video and graphics overlays. It also provides special video effects functions including texturing and fades, mosaics, blend, and so on.'

'What's more, the texture processing of DVI allows terrain mapping – very useful for flight sims and driving games. It also allows object texture mapping and textured horizons.' The result is a virtual world that looks infinitely more real than previous attempts.

In addition, Sense8's powerful *WorldToolKit* software provides real-time rendering of graphic images, sensor drivers to interface with the real world (through such equipment as VPL's Eyephones and Mattel's Powerglove), and 'geometry readers' – modules that input graphic 3D models created using other software such as *AutoCAD*.

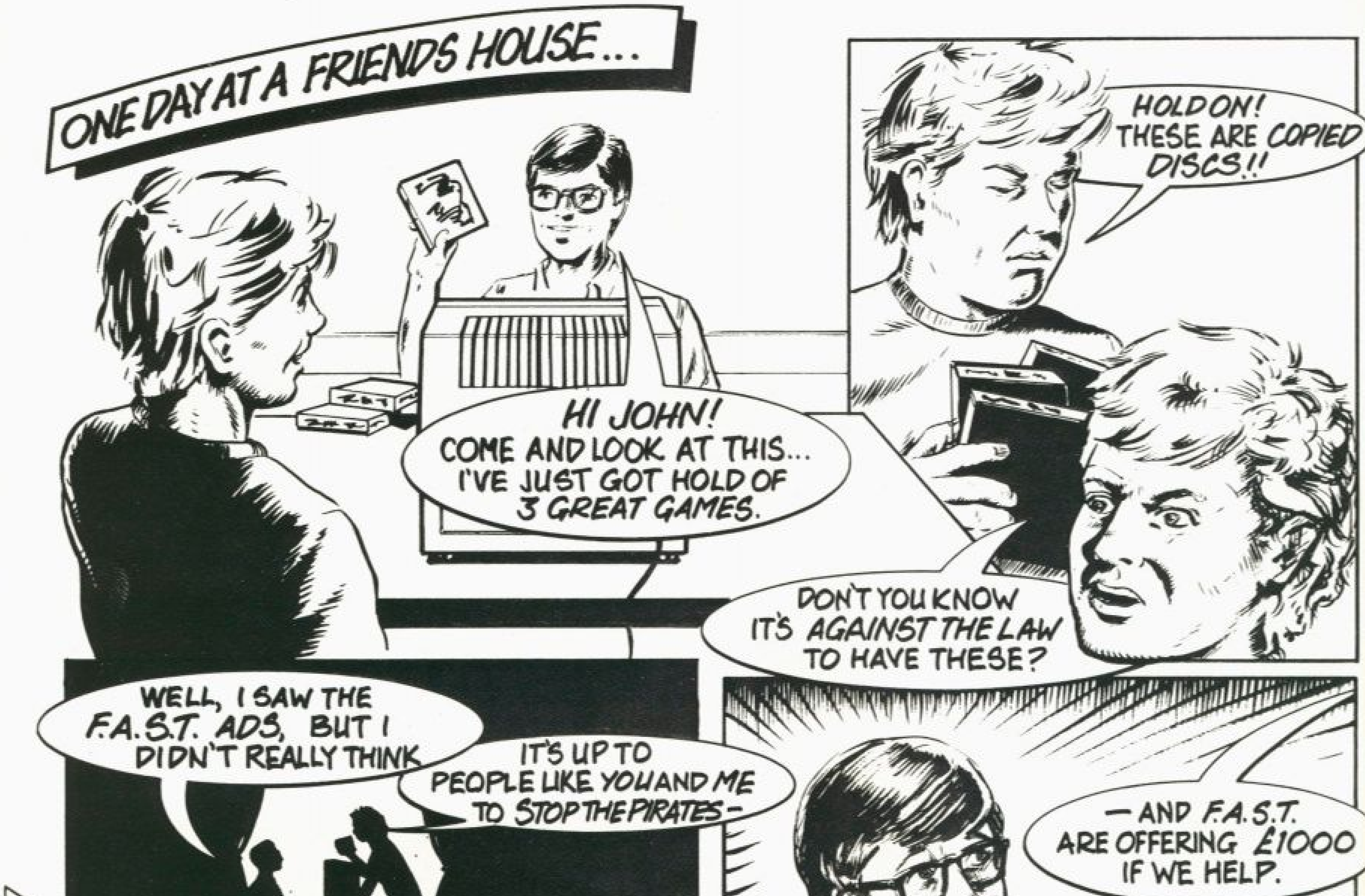
For games development, all objects in *WorldTool* can have 'tasks' associated with them, just as in Incentive's *3D Construction Kit* you can attach conditions and actions to objects. This means, for example, that can have velocity, acceleration, and conditions attached to it that will simulate gravity in your virtual environment.

Eric Gullichsen is bursting with justified enthusiasm as he announces that this new DVI/*WorldTool* system is available for under $20K. Indicating a screenshot of an older, untextured polygonal display, he asserts that 'Virtual realities that look like this are no longer acceptable. Once you add textures, things stop looking cartoonish and become video-realistic.' Don't miss next month's instalment of ACE's VR coverage to see exactly what he's getting so excited about...

> *"Software modelling is still the big problem with handling complex 3D environments in real time. People have been putting more effort into the hardware, but not enough into graphics data handling."*
> **Brad Hunt, Angel Studios**

Michael Limber, Director of Computer Animation, uses experience in architecture and industrial design to generate complex and detailed 3D environments.

This superb dragon from Angel Studios came to life in a Nintendo advertisement


ONE DAY AT A FRIENDS HOUSE...
HI JOHN! COME AND LOOK AT THIS... I'VE JUST GOT HOLD OF 3 GREAT GAMES.
HOLD ON! THESE ARE COPIED DISCS!!
DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO HAVE THESE?
WELL, I SAW THE F.A.S.T. ADS, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY THINK
IT'S UP TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME TO STOP THE PIRATES—
— AND F.A.S.T. ARE OFFERING £1000 IF WE HELP.
LET'S TURN THE TABLES ON THESE CROOKS. I'VE GOT THE NUMBER FOR F.A.S.T. HERE.
F.A.S.T. 071-497 8973
DAVID
STU.
HELLO F.A.S.T. GET HOLD OF A PEN, I'VE GOT AN ADDRESS FOR YOU...

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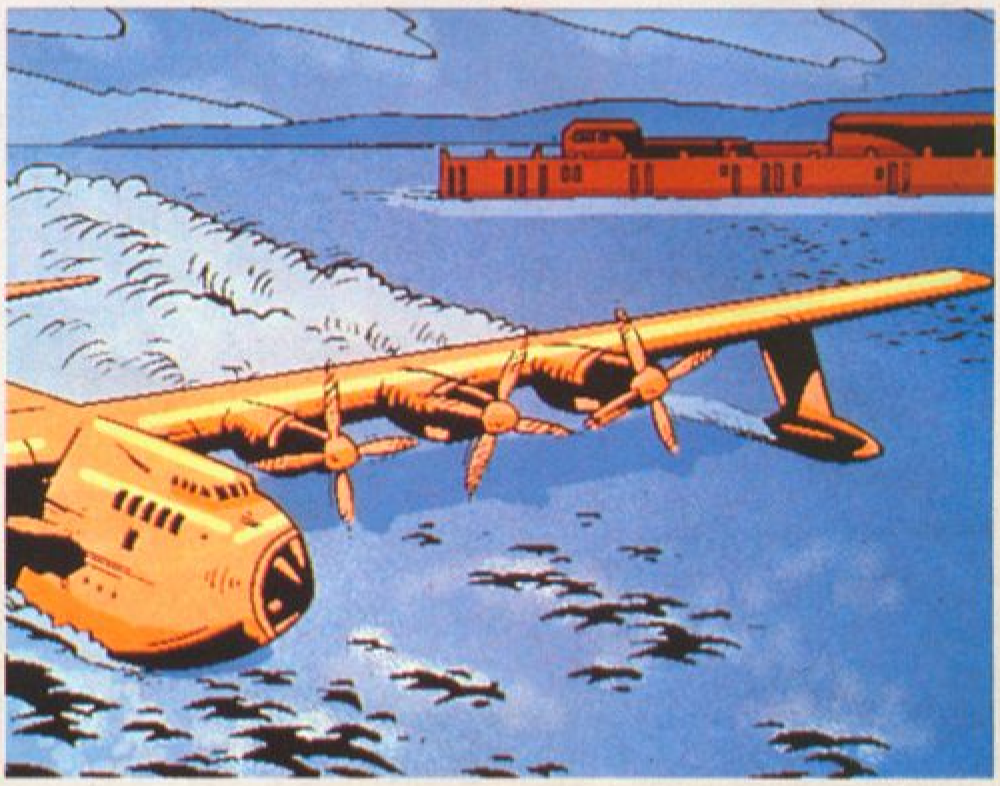
CD Countdown

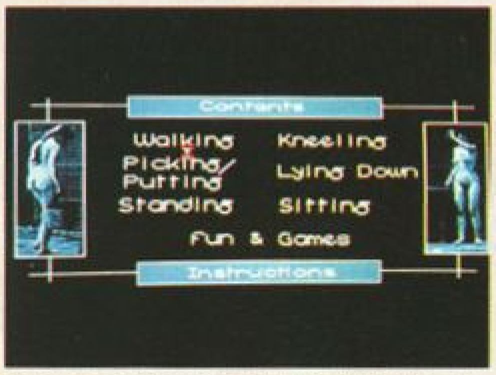
CDTV, a CDTV upgrade for Amiga 500 owners scheduled for summer launch, and oodles of software were all on show at CES. These are the sort of titles that Amiga and CDTV owners could be getting their teeth into in just a few weeks from now...

AMIGA UPGRADE

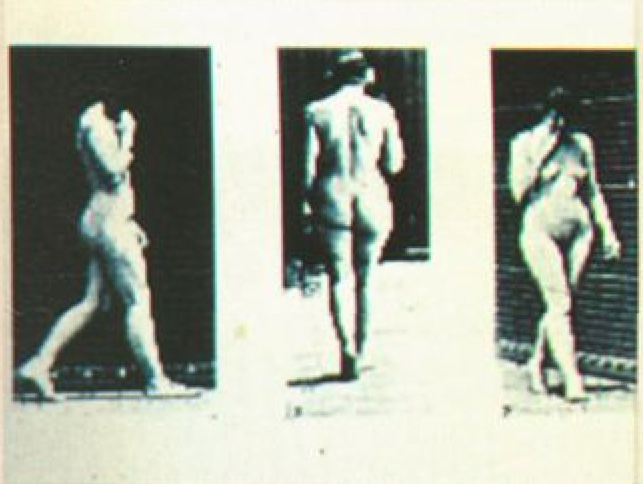
The CDTV Amiga upgrade looks rather like the old C64 disk drives: a cream coloured box with a slot for your CD in the front. It will enable Amiga owners to play all CDTV software, though rumour suggested you might have to pay extra for the infra-red controller if you wanted to abandon your keyboard. Price for the unit has not yet been announced but could be high: maybe as much as £299. Commodore claimed the unit on show was the finished version and that supplies should be available in the UK this summer.



The Cautious Condor and its owner are shamelessly modelled on *Howard Hughes* and the Spruce Goose.



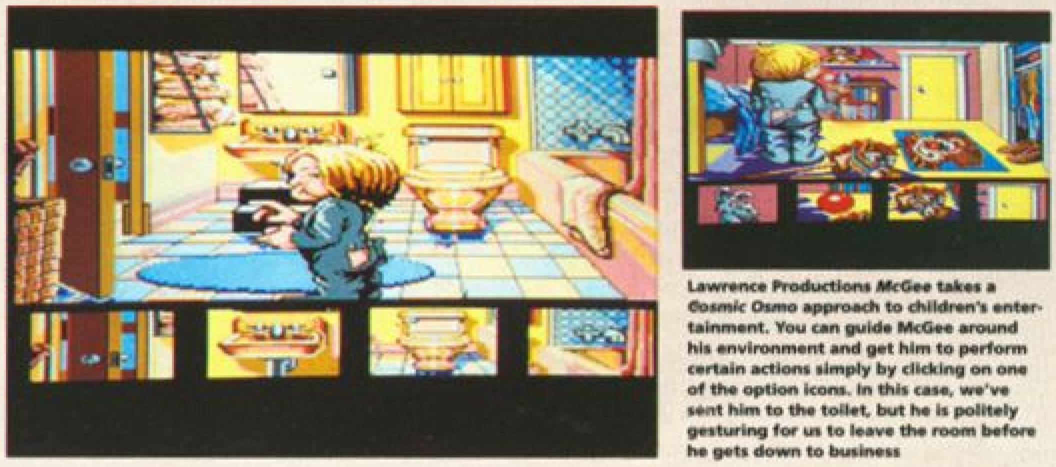
Clement Chambers is at it again. CRL boss Clem obviously thought long and hard about how to get naked women onto the screen in the best possible taste. He ended up by using his own production utility DUNE (covered in ACE 30) to provide an animation database of early cinematographer Muybridge's naked women. Er..thank you.



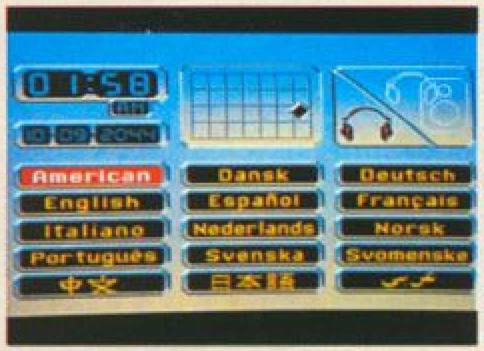
1991 looks like being the year when CD software finally takes off. CDTV is now a certainty for a spring launch (barring acts of God and bankers), NEC are achieving an ever wider user base for their PC Engine CD software, the FM Towns continues to attract developers despite a tiny 70K user base in Japan, and Nintendo did nothing to quell rumours of a cheap CD-ROM add-on for the Super Famicom.

Other rumours included a forthcoming FM Towns launch in the US and Europe, based on the machine's PC capability and an alliance with Microsoft. Those with money in their pocket can look forward to the possibility of buying a Towns complete with Windows 3, superlative graphics, and a whopping great price tag in late 1991 or early 92.

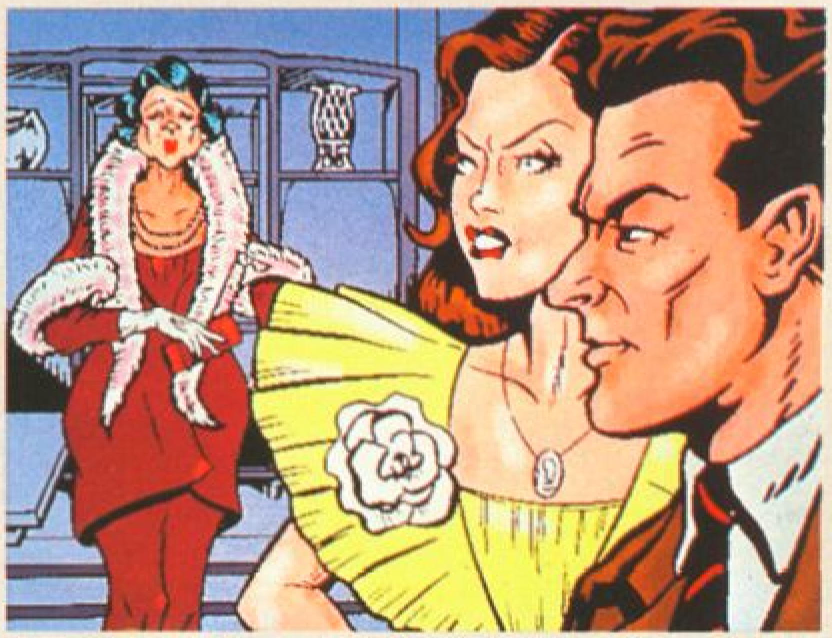
Nobody was particularly excited by all this but, perhaps better, everyone owned up to a firm conviction that not only was CD



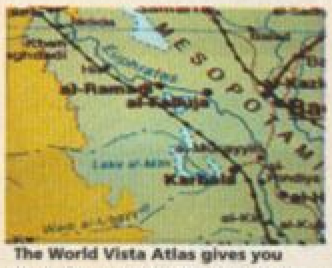
Lawrence Productions *McGee* takes a *Cosmic Osmo* approach to children's entertainment. You can guide McGee around his environment and get him to perform certain actions simply by clicking on one of the option icons. In this case, we've sent him to the toilet, but he is politely gesturing for us to leave the room before he gets down to business



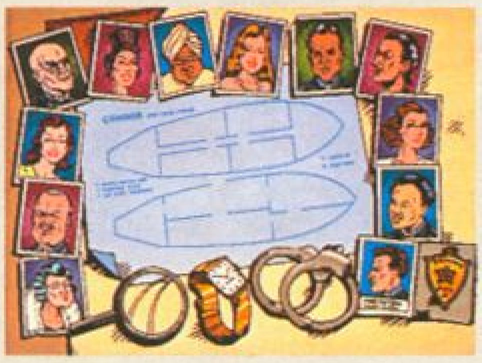
Commodore have redesigned the user interface for the CDTV to cater for all linguistic groups. There's also a very attractive audio CD control panel featuring all the usual high-end CD utilities (shuffle, loop, time elapsed etc)



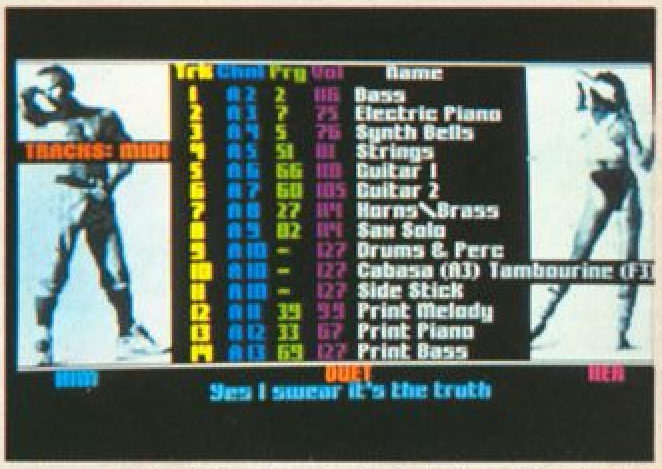
There's no animation in the Cautious Condor and no digitised graphics. Ah! What a relief!



The World Vista Atlas gives you that oft-quoted facility to spin the globe, zoom in on a continent, zoom in on a country, and then finally zoom in on a specific area for geographical information. Only CD storage capacity can give you this!



Every character, scene, and object you encounter could be significant. There is no guarantee that your travels will reveal sufficient evidence to make a successful accusation...



Trk	Chnl	Prg	Vol	Name
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2	A3	7	75	Electric Piano
3	A4	5	76	Synth Bells
4	A5	51	81	Strings
5	A6	66	118	Guitar 1
6	A7	60	105	Guitar 2
7	A8	27	114	Horns\Brass
8	A9	82	114	Sax Solo
9	A10	-	127	Drums & Perc
10	A10	-	127	Cabasa (A3) Tambourine (F3
11	A10	-	127	Side Stick
12	A1	39	99	Print Melody
13	A12	33	67	Print Piano
14	A13	69	127	Print Bass

Yes I swear it's the truth

CD+G enables you to display simple graphics and text while your commercial CD+G audio disk is playing. In this case it's being used with the CD+G+MIDI function, showing you which MIDI channels are being used by the current disk and – at the bottom – which vocals are being sung. Result – you can not only singalong Karaoke style but can also change the orchestration by feeding the MIDI track into your synth and getting CD audio, synth, and your own voice all working together!

SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

Movie buffs may like to know that one of the voices in the *Cautious Condor* is done by an actor from the cult movie Surf Nazis Must Die. A small prize to the first person (if anyone!) who can let us know which voice it is...

the way to go, but that we'd be going that way during the year, with a mass CD software market now only two to three years away.

And, putting their money where their mouths are, the software companies responded by showing more CD product than ever before...

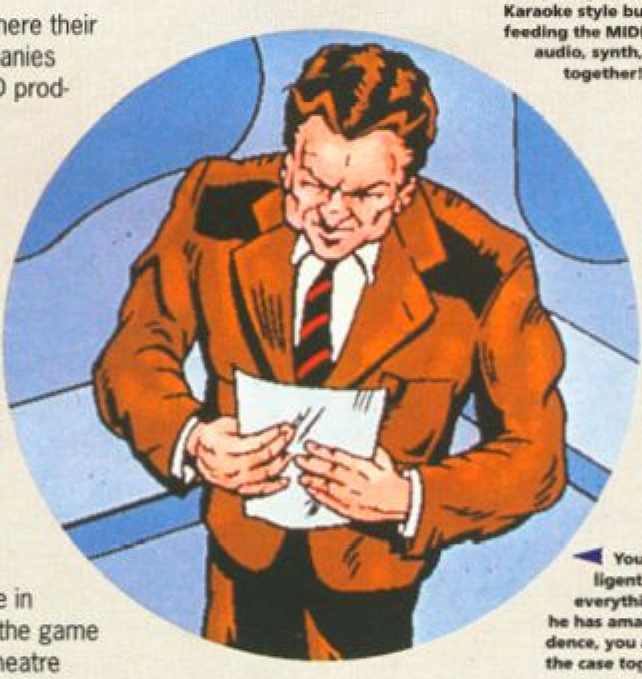
WILD BIRD YONDER

Star of the CDTV show was Tiger Media's *Case of the Cautious Condor*. Set in 1937 it takes a classic Agatha Christie approach to detection as you guide a detective from one location to another on board the Cautious Condor flying boat following the murder of the owner's son.

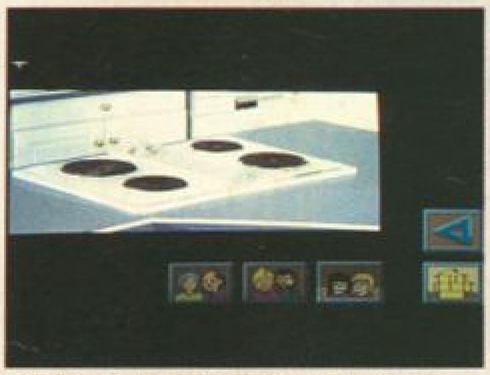
'Structurally,' explains TM's boss Laura Buddine, 'it's a maze in time and space. The model for the game was taken from an interactive theatre group in the States who stage events in houses to which the audience is invited. You wander from room to room and scenes are taking place all over the place. Your experience differs according to which rooms you visit.'

There are three hours of audio visual material on the disk, but playtime is limited to 30 minutes – approximately the time the detective has to solve the murder, so the game is almost a real-time experience. There are 15000 paths through the game and only one solution – despite the fact that the game has already been available for some time on the Towns and Tandy CD PC, TM know of only one successful solver. The solution can only be had when your detective (who is intelligent and remembers everything he sees) has enough evidence to make a correct accusation.

Interestingly, TM have avoided animation. They were already tight for space (yes, tight – even on CD) and decided instead to concentrate on creating a 1930's comic strip atmosphere with hand-drawn graphics. For this reason, they also abandoned the idea of digitised graphics: 'These would have been cheaper for us,' claims Laura, 'but we kept thinking that digitised realistic graphics would actually have begged the question as to why things weren't moving. We abandoned the animation because we wanted to a good game, not bad TV!'



Your detective is intelligent and remembers everything he sees. When he has amassed sufficient evidence, you and he can crack the case together.



Our House gives you a chance to move through time and space as you not only explore a house but also get the chance to see and hear what it must have been like in other historical periods. For example, we can click on the stove in the kitchen (as here) and not only get information on how it works but also see stoves from other time periods by clicking on the icons for different human generations at the bottom of the screen

Hmmm...we reckon that's an acute observation that a lot of other CD developers could and should take note of.

The audio track uses a dozen actors from an American troupe that specialise in recreating 30' radio drama. All of the SFX were generated by traditional radio techniques (fiddling around with bowls of water etc) rather than by synthesis.

This game doesn't break any technological barriers. Instead, it's set out to achieve perfection of its own kind, and undoubtedly succeeded. Check out the screenshots for a glimpse of some other CDTV products...

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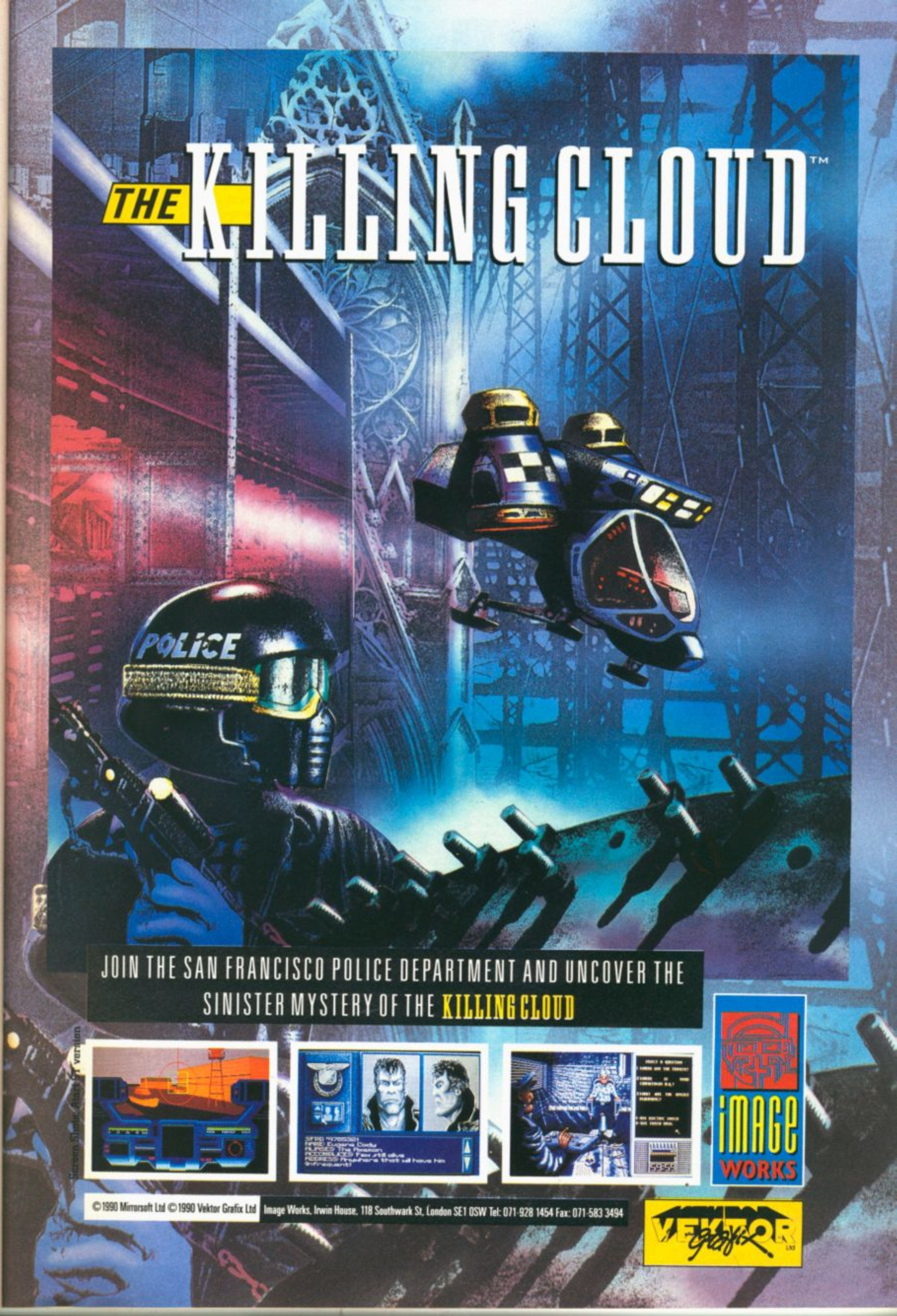
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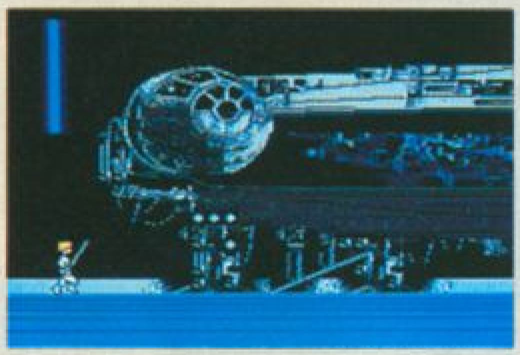
WEST SIDE STORY

Technical director Doug Crockford and producer Kalani Streicher relaxing on the Ranch 'My ideal machine is possible right now...' claims Doug

Lucasfilm and Electronic Arts are at the forefront of games software development on the West Coast. ACE goes live in America...


Star Wars looks impressive on the NES and points the way towards the possibility of some of Lucasfilm's more sophisticated games being produced for 16-bit consoles in 1991. More news on this release in the news section of this issue

Sega are now claiming sales of nearly a million Megadrives in the States (where the system is known as the Genesis); there are already 28 million NES systems; the Game Boy is selling hand over fist; over 200,000 Americans are in love with the Lynx. While one half of the country glues itself to the TV screen for religious inspiration, the other half gets stuck into *Super Mario*, which some people think is the same thing.

As a result, companies like EA and Lucasfilm – traditionally the home of state-of-the-art PC software – are now having to turn their attention to the cut and thrust of the console world. How are they coping?

RANCHY BUSINESS

ACE readers may remember our exclusive coverage of the Skywalker Ranch in Lucas Valley. Created by George 'Star Wars' Lucas for his software and technical whizz-kids, the period-style buildings include a complex of spacious wooden stables that house Lucasfilm Games.

Lucasfilm are now combining their high-end PC games development with programming for the NES. As a result, they're just about to release two games that could hardly be more different: *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* for the PC and *Star Wars* for the NES, both of which you can see shots of on these pages.

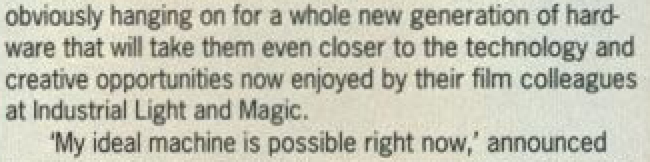
'We're going very carefully into console development,' says software supremo A.J. Redmer, 'we've done the programming for *Star Wars* but we've teamed up with JVC for the sales and distribution.' This approach has insulated Lucasfilm from much of the upheaval (mostly financial) normally associated with console publishing, so computer game buffs who appreciate the company's sophisticated PC product needn't worry that it will be drowned in a flood of marioware.

Meanwhile, Lucasfilm are still keeping very close tabs on future technology. Although very taken with the Neo Geo ('You could do some seriously impressive development on that machine', gloated AJ), the lads are obviously hanging on for a whole new generation of hardware that will take them even closer to the technology and creative opportunities now enjoyed by their film colleagues at Industrial Light and Magic.

'My ideal machine is possible right now,' announced tech-boffin Doug Crockford, '...it has full motion video, real time digital compression, and high quality stereo audio with dynamic real-time mixing. The big problem is that the current CD-ROM standard just isn't good enough. We've already conceived a system here that can drag data off compact disk far faster – and certainly fast enough for FMV – but the trouble is the standard CD-ROM drives can't handle it. You need a lot more bandwidth if you want to be truly interactive.'

CONSOLE ARTS

A few miles further south of Lucasfilm, EA have committed very heavily to developing for the Sega Genesis. Under the


SWOTL gives you the choice of three American planes to fly ranging from the P51 Mustang to the massive B-17 Flying Fortress. The game comes with a 225 page manual packed with contemporary photos and information. In-game graphics were by Jim Mcleod and Martin Cameron

Larry Holland lives, breathes, and programs World War Two aerial combat scenarios. 'The research is the really satisfying bit,' says the man who's probably read more WW2 air force books than anyone else, but he hints that his next game will take place in a different setting

IT'S A DOGIE'S LIFE

Workers on Skywalker Ranch really have to slum it at lunchtimes. A quick stroll across the landscaped gardens, past the 19th century-style conservatory, and into the authentic Olde American manor house, the Lucasfilm slaves are corralled into a plush dining room where they have to endure the cooking of a master Cordon Bleu chef. On the menu when we arrived:

1. ***Sauteed pork chops basted with Fuji apple sauce***
2. ***Yellow Finn potatoes***
3. ***Boiled red cabbage with fennel***
4. ***Garden salad***

Yes, it's a dogie's life at the ranch.

Greg Hammond, producer of Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe, 'flying' one of the P47 models they digitised in their search for the perfect plane animation. Graphic artiists Jim Mcleod and Martin Cameron digitised models like this in different positions and sizes – the program then does all the 'in-betweening' necessary for dynamic scaling during flight

SWOTL SECRETS

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe features several significant coding developments that make it even more playable than its popular predecessor, Battle of Britain.

First, there's increased artificial intelligence in the opposition, making the challenge tougher and more engaging all round. But according to producer Greg Hammond, 'What makes this product really come alive much more than Battle of Britain did is that now we have this dynamic scaling where, if an airplane is in the distance and it's coming towards you at 400 mph and you're in a fighter at a similar speed, it means your rate of speed at closing is 800mph combined. In Battle of Britain the planes were a little bit slower, but the real improvement is that in SWOTL they don't appear close up quite so soon – first they're little dots on the horizon and then, as you fly past, they're scaled very rapidly giving you a real sensation of speed. This is particularly important because in this game we have jets doing as fast

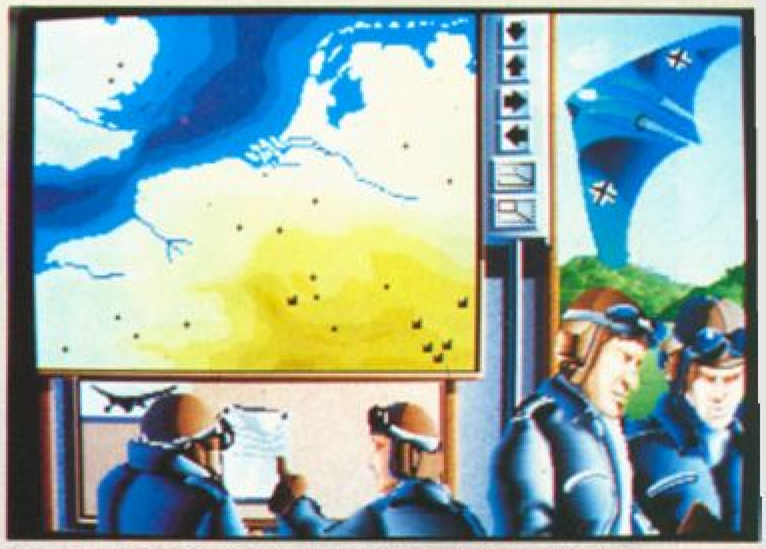
Luc Barthelet, heading up console development technology at Electronic Arts USA

guidance of development manager Luc Barthelet, console games are developed using a powerful Mac-based system with code being written in C and assembler. They then use a special utility to track down the areas of the code where the CPU is getting bogged down during run-time and optimise the relevant passages.

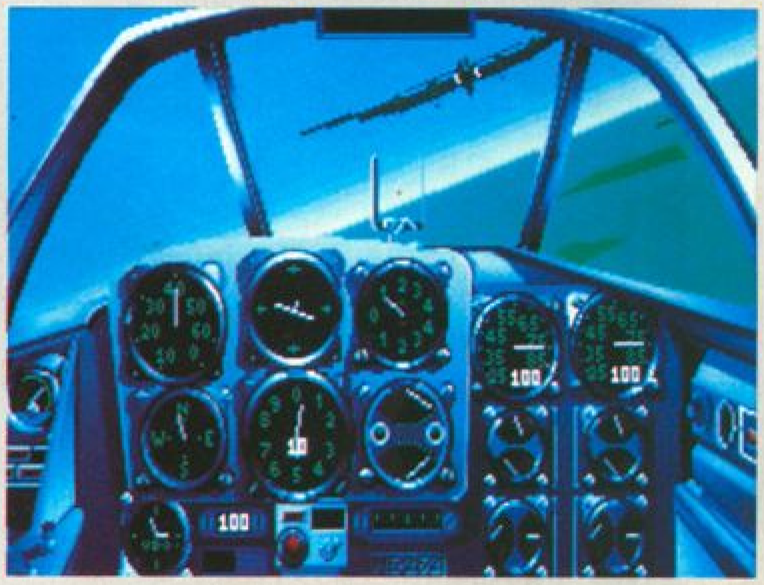
The latest fruits of this labour are *Road Rash* and *PGA Tour Golf* for the Sega. Still in development, *Road Rash* blends *Super Hang On*-style bike racing with aggressive punch-and-prang tactics as you race against fourteen other riders on public roads. High points are the animation of your figure as he lashes out at the opposition, takes a tumble, shakes himself, and clambers back onto his machine.

PGA Tour Golf on the Genesis takes most of the strengths of the computer version with fly-by views, tips from professionals, good shot options, 3D contoured greens, four courses, statistical tracking of your performance, and instant replay. You can also play against one to four human opponents.

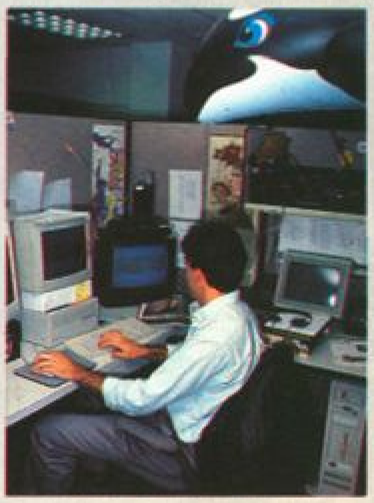
EA have fifteen in-house programmers, all with PC or console experience, aged between 25 and 30. Most of their games take around 20 manmonths to develop with up to three programmers and three graphic artists working on each title. 'Right now, we're looking ahead about one year for CD products,' says Luc, '...and then we can go from the problems of squeezing graphics onto floppies and cartridges to the problems of expanding them to fit 100mbytes!'



Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe sends you back to World War 2, but this time the game designers have speculated as to what might have happened if Hitler had succeeded in bringing some of his more obscure research projects into the war. Despite the speculation, the research is meticulous and historically accurate as the player dogfights and campaigns against the ME163 rocket plane and the Gotha 229 jet-powered flying wing



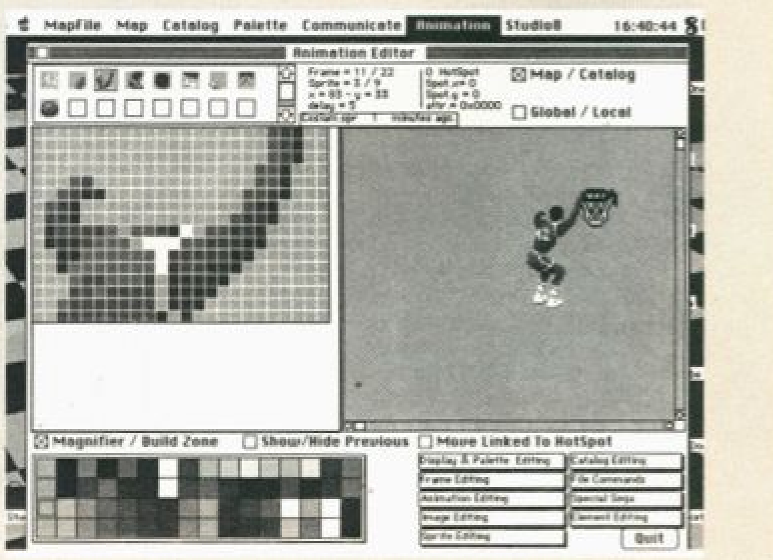
Enemy up ahead! SWOTL features speedier animation and more detailed 256 colour graphics. Once you've shot them down, you get instant replay – numerous other features include in-flight maps, a custom mission builder, and a pilot's service record to keep track of your performance



Most of EA's development is done on Mac systems..

...with special hardware that enables programmers to switch instantly into Sega emulation mode...

...and powerful software development tools. This module enables graphic artists to work on bitmapped backgrounds and sprites which can then be translated into character-block graphics (used by the Sega and, in the old days, by the C64 and Spectrum) and back again at will.



News
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Go LIVE to California!

The ACE Interactive Phone Line features live mini-interviews with Lucasfilm and EA developers. Dial now! They're on-line from the offical ACE on-sale date (8th February) for four weeks.

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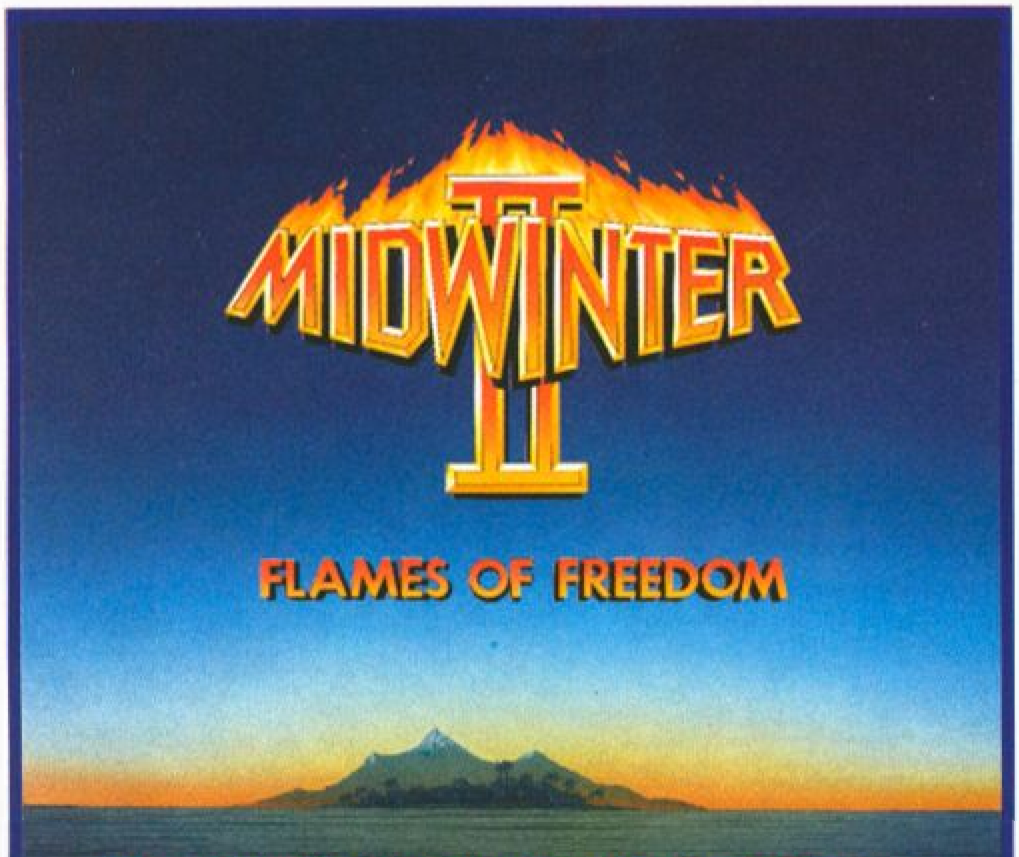
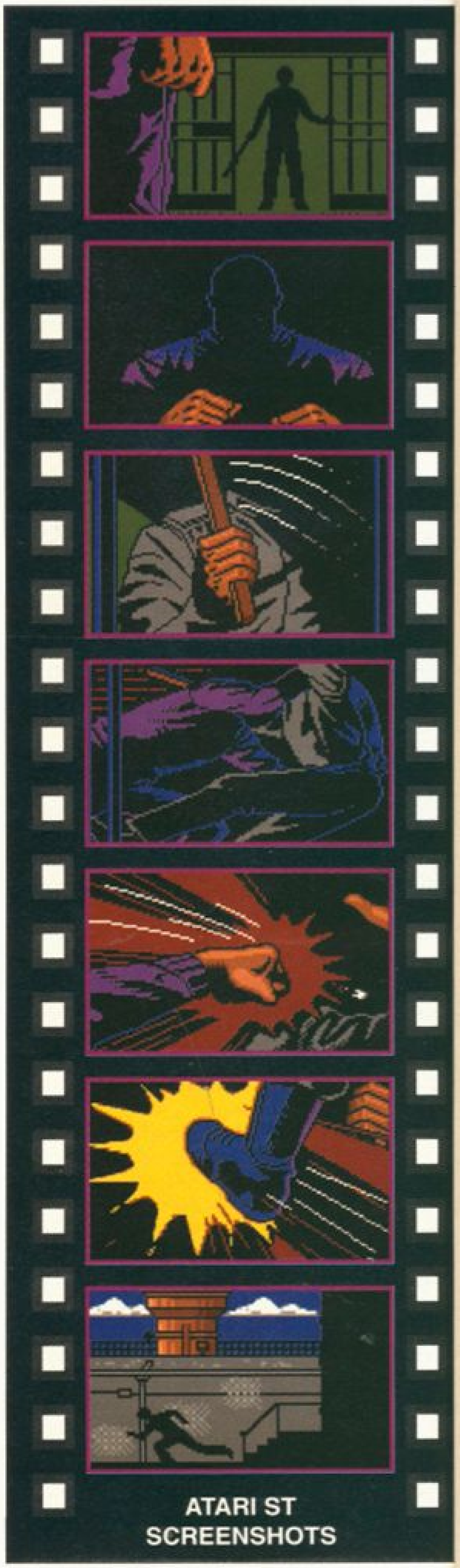
FLAMES OF F



Sixty years ago the ice-bound island of Midwinter was saved from the threat of destruction at the hands of invading hordes; but a prosperous future was denied by a greater enemy - the Earth's changing climate. Reclaimed by the seas which had created her, Midwinter was abandoned by her people, in search of a home on any friendly island standing tall above the rising seas.

"In the more temperate equatorial reaches of the Atlantic, only one of forty-two islands held out a hand, welcoming the survivors into the Atlantic Federation, a force for peace, prosperity and democracy. But the new home is threatened by the evil Saharan Empire, a mighty military dictatorship based on the African mainland, already enslaving the other island communities, and ultimately intent on conflict with the Federation.

The enslaved islands are home to freedom fighters looking to break free from Saharan domination and join the Federation. The mammoth task facing the Federation is to covertly aid the liberation of as many islands as possible before the Saharan Empire makes its final push for Atlantic domination. The Flames of Freedom must be lit. The torch is about to be passed to you."



ATARI ST
SCREENSHOTS

Push your body and your wits for hours on end against the most amazing, exciting and adve

FREEDOM

As the best Field Agent the Atlantic Federation has, you are charged with the execution of highly dangerous clandestine missions on each of the forty-one islands. Each island has its own political, administrative and cultural perspective, so each mission will require different aspects of your chosen physical, mental and psychological skills.

RESTRICTED

MISSION BRIEFING - BENI MAZAR

Your first mission objective is to sabotage a Power Station, You'll need to think through the entire process for yourself:- steal explosives from a local army base; find the engineer who designed the station; rescue his daughter to persuade him to give you the plans; hijack a vehicle for use; dodge or kill the sentrys; plant the explosives, and finally escape unseen.

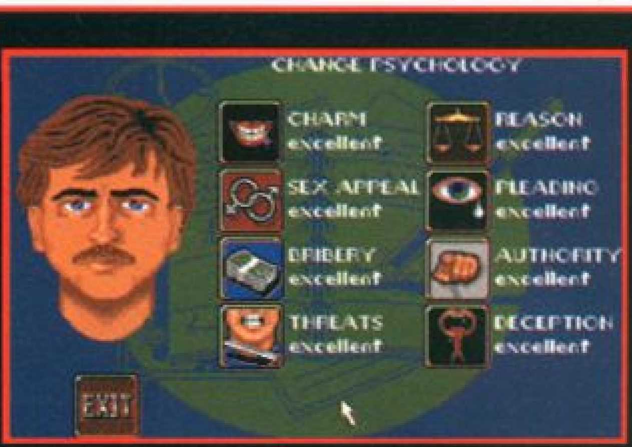
In every mission,you are on your own, but not without help. There are 4000 individuals with which you may interact, including friends, foes, and foes pretending to be friends. Every character has their own looks, personality and life history to assess. You have twenty-four modes of transport available to you, across land, through the air and both across and through the seas. You have over a quarter of a million square miles to cover, all mapped using Maelstrom's unique 3-D light sourced fractal landscapes, and thousands of buildings to explore.

Flames of Freedom provides you with a magnificent strategic challenge, fought according to your strengths, weaknesses and abilities, and visualised via graphics sequences even more stunning than those of its predecessor - with Midwinter II, a new age dawns

RAINBIRD

Flames of Freedom will be available soon for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC Compatible, from Rainbird, the Masters of Strategy.

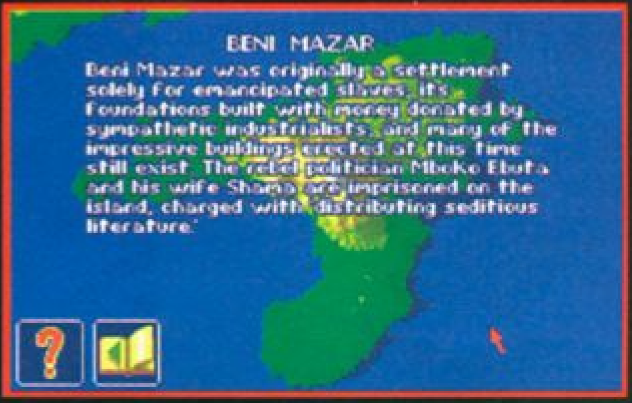
advenus strategy game. Midwinter II, This time its personal !


CHANGE PSYCHOLOGY

CHARM excellent	REASON excellent
SEX APPEAL excellent	PLEADING excellent
BRIBERY excellent	AUTHORITY excellent
THREATS excellent	DECEPTION excellent

★ Sophisticated character profile generators allow you to choose your own looks, sex, psychology and physical characteristics.

★ Choose to use Training mode to practice any aspect of the game, 'Firefight' to try one complete mission, or 'Campaign' to tackle the whole shooting match !

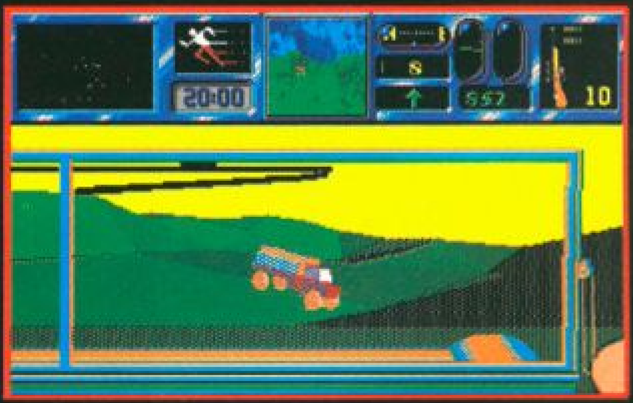

BENI MAZAR

Beni Mazar was originally a settlement solely for emancipated slaves, its foundations built with money donated by sympathetic industrialists, and many of the impressive buildings erected at this time still exist. The rebel politician Mboko Ebuta and his wife Shama are imprisoned on the island, charged with distributing seditious literature.'

★ Cover a quarter of a million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by light-sourced fractal techniques.

★ Auto-route options allow you to plan and execute travel within the 3-D automatically.

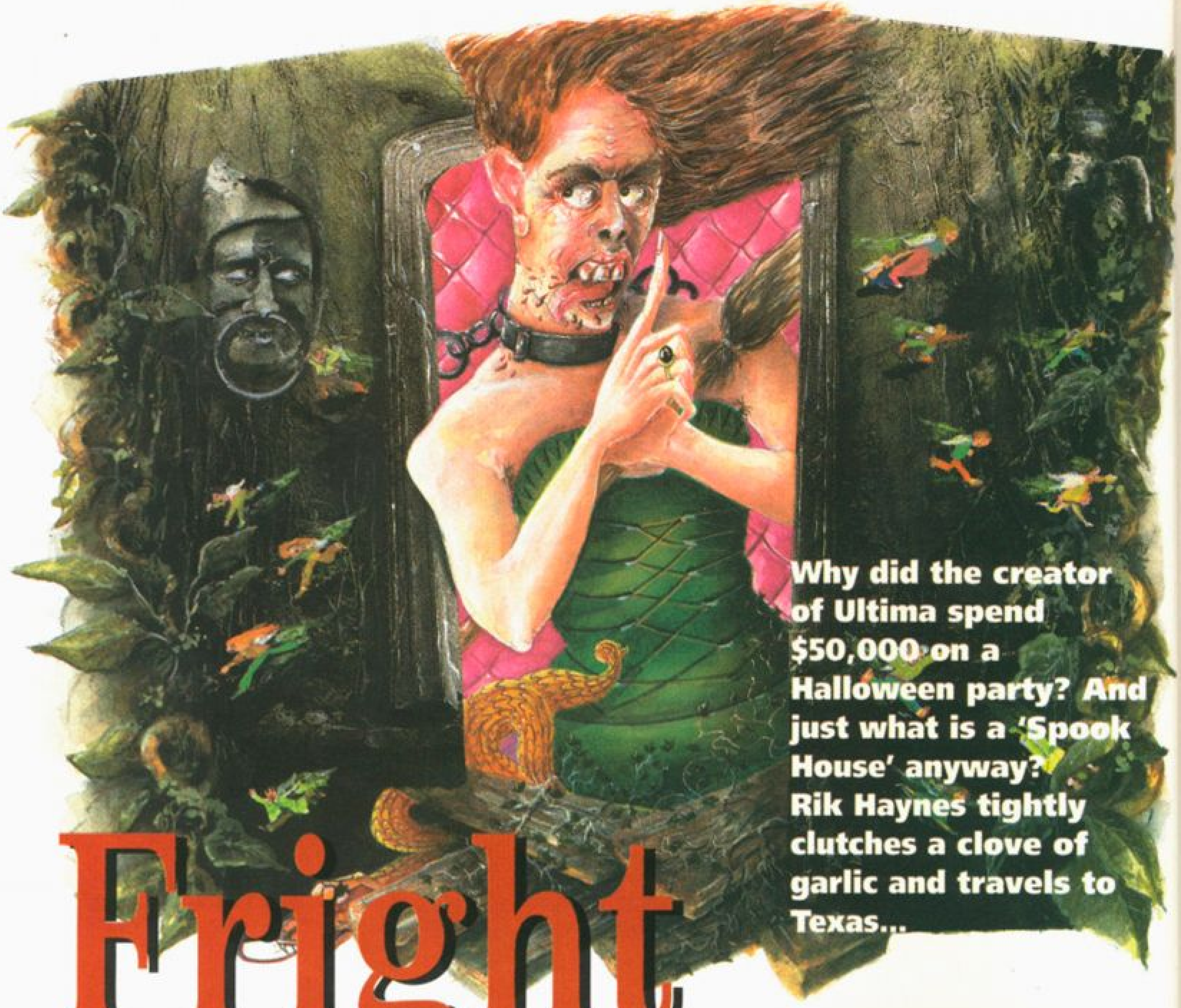
★ Interact with 4000 characters, each with an individual personal profile.



★ Utilise 24 modes of transport, across land, skies and seas.

★ Fight with 12 different weapons against a massive array of opposing firepower.

★ Use your investigative and deductive techniques to solve endless challenges to aid your progress.



Fright Night

Why did the creator of Ultima spend $50,000 on a Halloween party? And just what is a 'Spook House' anyway? Rik Haynes tightly clutches a clove of garlic and travels to Texas...

Cold fear runs through my body as the sounding of a distant bell is carried on the evening breeze. I carefully continue my journey to Britannia Manor, my heart and mind working overtime in nervous anticipation. The cloudy moon-less sky gives this night of October 31st the perfect setting for Halloween. The night belongs to ghouls, ghosts and Richard Garriott.

This millionaire gaming genius, creator of the popular series of *Ultima* fantasy role-playing games and co-founder of Origin, is now ready to thrill a more select audience of fantasy lovers. I join three town-locals for the quest of a life-time, I just hope we live long enough to tell the tale.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Let the quest begin. We follow a path lined with glowing pumpkin lanterns engraved with the foul smiles of a devil. Are they laughing at our impending doom? Lord British leads us to the door of Britannia Manor, once the site of a fine Abbey, the home of a now extinct order of monks.

Our guide boldly steps up to the front gates and points his staff at the crystal ball inside the hall. A violent burst of electricity sends the poor soul to his doom. We cannot get in this way. Rumours suggest some of the monks have fled into the nearby woods. Perhaps they know of a way inside this evil place?

A grim guide clothed in black robes wears a haunted look as we approach his encampment. A fire-pit burns bright, something boiling in its dark cauldron. The guide does indeed know of a long-forgotten entrance to the abbey and leads us to it. Along the way he tells us the sad story of this once beautiful building. "The evil sorceress, Minax, took over the Abbey. All who remained have never been seen again. Something vile and terrible must have happened to them. Are you sure you want to make this trip?," says our guide.

The woods are full of werewolves who angrily snarl at the five unwelcome visitors. We keep close to our fearless guide. A horrible noise commands our attention. Out of the fog we see the glimpse of a horrifying sight, a red-eyed Stalker tows the gruesome skeleton of a horse back into the mist of misery. The Well of Soul tells us to go back.

We reach the forgotten entrance. Vines encircle its Gothic columns like a hangman's noose. The cellar doorway is open but our guide won't go any further. We venture inside and a door drops down over the doorway. There's no going back now. This place is pitch-black and seemingly leads nowhere. Something is in here, we can hear it breath. We run through the wine cellar and up a secret stairway to be greeted by a maid dusting the bedroom. "Be careful, you have entered uninvited and unannounced into the realm of the Evil Enchantress, Minax," warns the simple servant. Our only hope of escape is to find the Gargoyles Talisman. Suddenly something pushes a hole through the bricks and starts to grab towards us. Time to go!

We learn of a creature that lives in the old bell tower, perhaps it knows of the Talisman? Faces, hands and arms push through the walls grabbing at us as we pass through the hallway. We reach the stairs of the bell tower. The bell tolls while bats squeal. A menacing vampire floats down from the ceiling looking for his next victim. Not us pal! We enter a foggy swamp - avoiding the soggy Monster from Under the Waterfall - as we cross the shaky bridge to the misty River Styx and boat beyond. We nervously climb onboard this feeble vessel. The boat suddenly moves by itself. We're less than half-way across, when Swamp Monsters jump out of the water and grab the boat and our legs! The boat rocks to and throw and we nearly end-up in the drink.

The Monster Cave certainly lives up to its name before we stumble upon the torture chamber. We weave our way through wailing victims as Minax's minions prod, whip and torture their pathetic captives. The Gatekeeper opens a creaky gate into the throne room. Minax sits at her throne occasionally using a cat-o-nine-tails to casually whip two little girls - twins tied to the throne. A mass of squirming humans sit on the floor. Dressed in a revealing sea-green gown Minax has a beautiful, sensuous body but as we approach she turns her terribly ugly face to us. The Gatekeeper keeps getting real close to us, tenderly touching each member of our party without speaking a word. Yuk!

Minax requires an offering before she'll give us the Talisman. She marks the forehead of a victim in our group with a sign of somebody in big trouble. I'm just glad it's not me. "You must seek your exit beyond the realm of mortal souls... in the Nether World," hisses Minax. "Now go!"

We're now barely half-way through our quest. We're scared, weary and at each-other's throats. Before us lies the chapel, snake cave, spider room, graveyard, crypt, gargoyles, gazebo, hanged man, laboratory, stairway to hell, maze, pit and chequered box before the grand finale with the demon in Garriott's double car garage. Sorry, it looks like reality has started to reenter the house of Lord British and our chill-spilling story. Never mind, I've had immense fun while it lasted.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

So what had I experienced in the past 45 minutes? Put simply, I'd played *Ultima* in the flesh! Instead of multi-coloured sprites I'd encountered over 75 'actors' in ghoulish make-up. The playfield didn't consist of parallax-scrolling backdrops but steep stairs to climb, narrow places to crawl through and no-place to hide. Gameplay in this world consisted of me screaming out in fear for more times than I can remember, or care to own-up to.

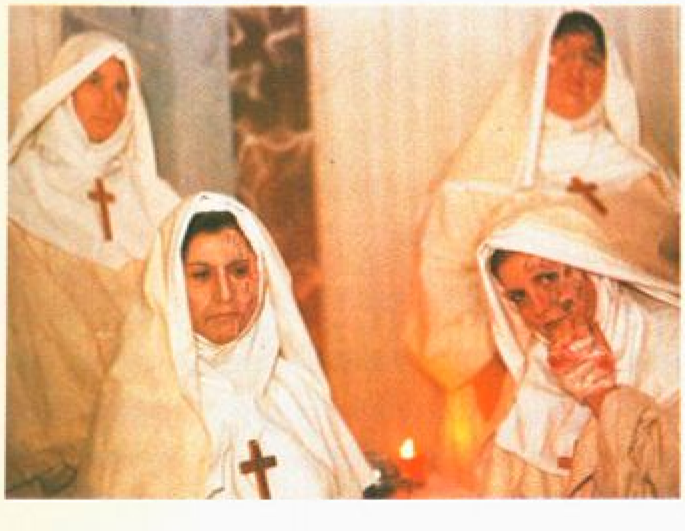
Richard Garriott, eccentric millionaire games designer, had turned his hill-top mansion into the ultimate haunted house. This Spook House was superior to anything even Walt Disney's theme-park Imagineers could provide. Garriott's creation was interactive; I had to converse with the characters and work with my fellow party of explorers. I became totally immersed in the sights, sounds, smells and story. We just didn't know who or what would come next. The Spook House was a fantastic, thrilling and unforgettable experience.

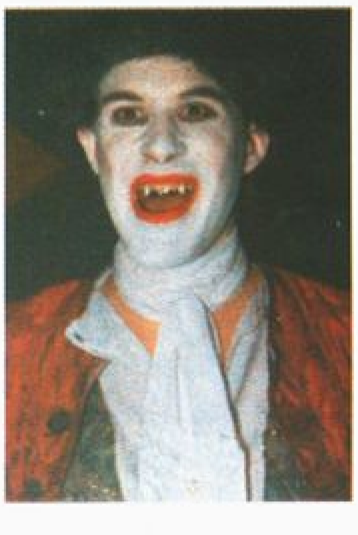
Just what prompted Garriott to do it? "I've been doing Spook Houses a lot longer than I've been doing software," admits Garriott. "I lay it all on my mother. She used to play pranks on me when I was a kid, like building a fake brick wall where my bedroom doorway used to be and waking me up in the middle of the night with scary noises." With such a background, it was perhaps inevitable that Garriott would end up turning his lovely home into a $50000 Spook House.

There was merely one question left unanswered: what will the imaginative Garriott do next time? "I've already got a heck of a lot of ideas for the next Spook House," smirks Garriott. If only he didn't have to produce *Ultima VII* first!

TALES OF TRIVIA

- Richard Garriott and his helpers traded stories until four in the morning about how they'd managed to scare people during the night.
- The Spook House took about six weeks to construct. Garriott's jacuzzi became a swamp, his backyard was turned into a graveyard. He even hired his neighbours' house to hold a party for everybody who had worked on the Spook House.
- People from the local town of Austin queued outside Garriott's house for nearly 12 hours to receive a free ticket to the Spook House. Unfortunately, not everybody got one. As a result one person immediately sold her ticket to a disappointed punter for 100 dollars.
- One place people didn't visit during the spooking was Garriott's personal astronomical observatory. Garriott's father is a former NASA astronaut who has flown aboard both the Skylab and Space Shuttle.
- Richard Garriott often jokes about his passion for movies and lack of love for literature. Garriott claims he's only ever needed three books to write his Ultima games: C.L. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lords of the Rings* and the *Apple II Rom Manual*.
- Origin had an estimated revenue of 10 million dollars during 1990.
- Remember, as a member of the Exclusive ACE Club, we gave YOU the chance to visit this Spook House!





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Digital Deities

What's the connection between gods, Guildford and goldfish? Rik Haynes previews the forthcoming sequels to Populous and Powermonger...

It's hard to believe one of Britain's best game developers works in what are kindly described as unassuming conditions. Bullfrog, creator of the award-winning *Populous* and *Powermonger*, is busily preparing its next generation of games above a seedy-looking shop in Guildford.

Little wonder then, that this talented company began its illustrious career writing less exciting products more in keeping with these down-beat surroundings. Indeed, a database package seems to be Bullfrog's skeleton in the cupboard. More surprising is the company's name change from Taurus to Bullfrog. Piranha would have been far more appropriate, as these fearsome creatures claim pride of place in the Bullfrog silicon sweatshop.

THE GREAT WAR

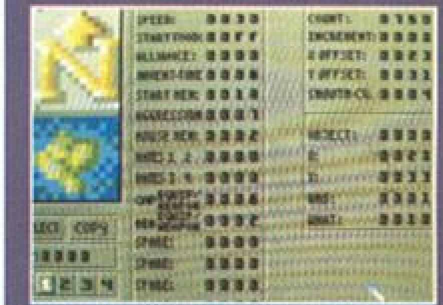
Dedicated Powermongers will be pleased to hear Bullfrog's current project is a series of extra 'Worlds of *Powermonger*' data-disks filled to the brim with new scenarios, people, weapons and graphics. "Due to the success of the *Populous* data-disks we had some *Powermonger* data-disks in mind at the very start of development," explains Peter Molyneux, the boss of Bullfrog. "The scope of things you can change in these data-disks is enormous. Every single aspect about a person, the landscape and the way they interact is redefinable."

The first 'Worlds of *Powermonger*' data-disk will be set during the First World War. The Great War was chosen as the premier *Powermonger* data-disk scenario because new technology was just breaking into warfare at this time. "World War Two had too many technological things already there to make it realistic," offers Molyneux, "World War One was just about perfect, I like the idea of the trenches. You can just cut a 'V' down in the vector graphics landscape. The First World War seems more heroic somehow."

"You can tell a squadron of biplanes to attack a village and they'll strafe or bomb it," Molyneux enthuses. "People will actually dig trenches and entrench themselves in there. This will be like *Powermonger WWI* instead of just another extra

WAR OF THE WORLDS

The concept of creating your own 'Worlds of *Powermonger*' data-disks is very exciting, but how would you actually go about it? Peter Molyneux explains how you could produce an Earth vs the Flying Saucers B-movie sci-fi *Powermonger* data-disk... "The first thing you could do is draw the landscape using any paint package like *DeluxePaint III*. You then design the maps to play on and bring them into the game. Then, you could design the attributes of all the people in the game and the weapons they could actually use. People can have a whole range of attributes such as curiosity, intelligence, loyalty, how much they eat, how fast they breed, how long they live, and so on. We've got about 10 basic variables which you can adjust. Manipulation of these variables gives you an enormous range of difference in reactions for each person. Then you could change the attributes of the weapons they use. There were 10 weapons in the original *Powermonger* but the program will, in fact, support up to 64 different types of weapon. These are broken down into different classes, firing weapons like a bow and arrow and static weapons like a cannon. You can set the destructive ranges of weapons, which in the case of a cannon is one square. If you wanted to be a sick bastard you could set the destructive range of a weapon to half the area of the map and 'nuke' your opponent. It's all been carefully designed to give you an enormous variation. You can say to an alien person, 'I'm going to make you very aggressive, very curious and very domineering'. That alien will then do its own thing. But you can't give the alien specific objectives to fulfil during the course of the game. It's up to the individual person to decide what to do in the game, that's the whole basis of *Powermonger*. It all sounds incredibly complicated but it isn't once you've got used to editing the basic variables."



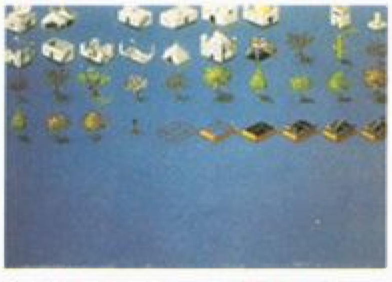
One of the Editors used by Bullfrog to create a 'Worlds of *Powermonger*' data-disk.

Bullfrog boys (clockwise from centre forward): Sean Cooper, Glenn Corpes, Simon Hunter, Gary Carr, Peter Molyneux, Kevin Donkin and new-boy Alex

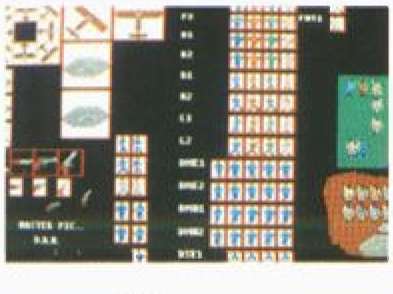
DEATH OF A GOLDFISH

Bullfrog has two tropical fish tanks in its cramped office. One is filled with piranha, the other contains the hapless victims waiting to be eaten alive. As my visit was a special occasion, the hungry piranha had a treat in store. A beautiful fan-tailed goldfish wasn't quite so lucky. At first the shy piranha only took little bites out of the defenseless golden fishy but a split-second later, the largest piranha attacked and sliced the goldfish clean in two. Its head, trailing a stream of blood, floated to the top of the tank. The rest of it was nowhere to be seen. The blood in the water then caused such a food frenzy we had to count the number of piranha left in the tank when it was over. The red-bellied piranha (Rooseveltiella Nattereri) grows to a size of 30cm in the northern regions of South America. Its conical teeth and well developed jaw muscles gives it the talent to take big bites out of the flesh of its victims. The red-bellied piranha is banned from certain parts of North America and Australia to prevent them becoming naturalised in local rivers. If you're interested, they like tanks with subdued lighting, oh, and they're partial to the odd goldfish or three!

Forget Jaws, a red-bellied piranha is far more frightening... especially if you're a goldfish!



Bullfrog have been toying around with several graphic styles for possible future expansion data-disks.



Preliminary graphics for the First World War *Powermonger* data-disk – drawn by a fan of the original game and sent into Pullfrog!

missions disk. What it won't be is historically accurate. If it was historically accurate you'd have to be forced into winning certain engagements. You'll still get the choice of playing British or German forces in your conquest of Europe. All the graphics will change, except for obvious things like trees. We're having a few problems with certain features though, like what should we do with the sheep? There weren't that many sheep wandering around the Somme in 1916!"

"Hopefully the 'Worlds of *Powermonger*' data-disks will be coming out at £9.99 each. If the First World War data-disk is successful, then we're planning to do an American Civil War data-disk which will coincide rather nicely with the launch of the PC version of *Powermonger*," Molyneux states. Phil Trelford, who has previously worked on Psygnosis' *Blood Money*, is writing the PC version of *Powermonger*. This adaption, due to be released in early April, can be played across a network of up to four machines. *Powermonger* is also being converted onto more exotic Japanese formats like the Nintendo Super Famicom, Sharp X68000 and NEC PC9801. These adaptions are being handled by Imagineer, this top Japanese games developer has already converted *Populous* and *Sim City* onto various machines.

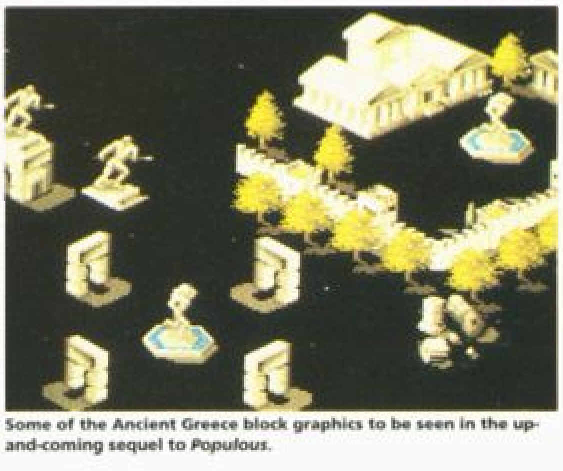
"The American Civil War data-disk will have things like muskets, rockets to send messages, horse-pulled wagon trains and proper sailing boats. Again, it will be a completely different game. You'll have all-new weapons and personalities. There will be battles between Union *(Northern) and* Confederate (Southern) forces, plus a few Indian (Native Americans) skirmishes as well. All we're doing is using the American Civil War as inspiration. I'm really looking forward to doing the American Civil War data-disk, it should be great fun."

"If there's any life left in the old data-disk dog by then, we'll do a futuristic one, possibly bundled with the Editors we use to make-up these *Powermonger* worlds so people can create their own (see the panel for further details). The only difference between a *Powermonger* data-disk designed by you and the one's created by us, is that we'll be adding special little features to the game like the trench warfare found in the World War One data-disk."

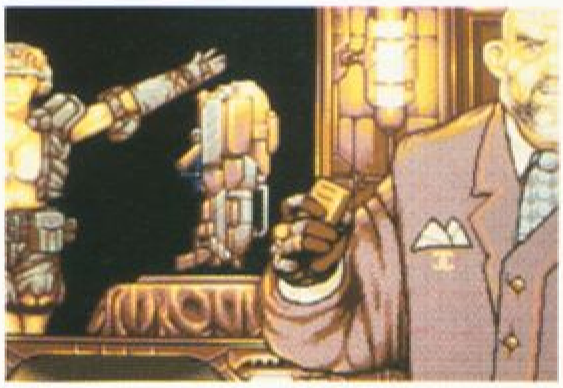
The first *Powermonger* data-disk should be available as you read this

LAND OF THE GODS

To quote the *Powermonger* manual, "Bullfrog has an idea of the ideal game it wants to write. *Populous* was the first step to writing this game and *Powermonger* is further along. But Bullfrog's ideal game is yet to be written". So will *Populous II* hit that high? "We've been working on the design of *Populous II* since the original was completed," says Molyneux, "*Populous* is very close to all our hearts and we really want to make a very good job of Populous II because the game deserves it."



Some of the Ancient Greece block graphics to be seen in the up-and-coming sequel to *Populous*.



The next Bullfrog release after *Populous II* is currently being programmed by Sean Cooper. Code-named 'Bob' is has something to do with biogenetics. Bullfrog is also working on another 'new concept' game titled *Evolution*. Look out for a special report in a future issue of ACE.

"We want to cure some of the *Populous* problems. The trouble with *Populous* is that towards the end of the game if you're slightly ahead it's obvious that you're going to win. So we're putting some more balancing elements in so the world is never actually won until you've finished the whole thing. The basic action of the game is exactly the same, raising and lowering land. The landscape plays *more of a part, so as you raise a point up the land*scape changes. If you build a mountain there will be a snowy point at the top, as it goes down to sea level it has a green belt, desert and swamp areas. These all have different effects on the terrain, so in this respect, it's going to be a little more strategic."

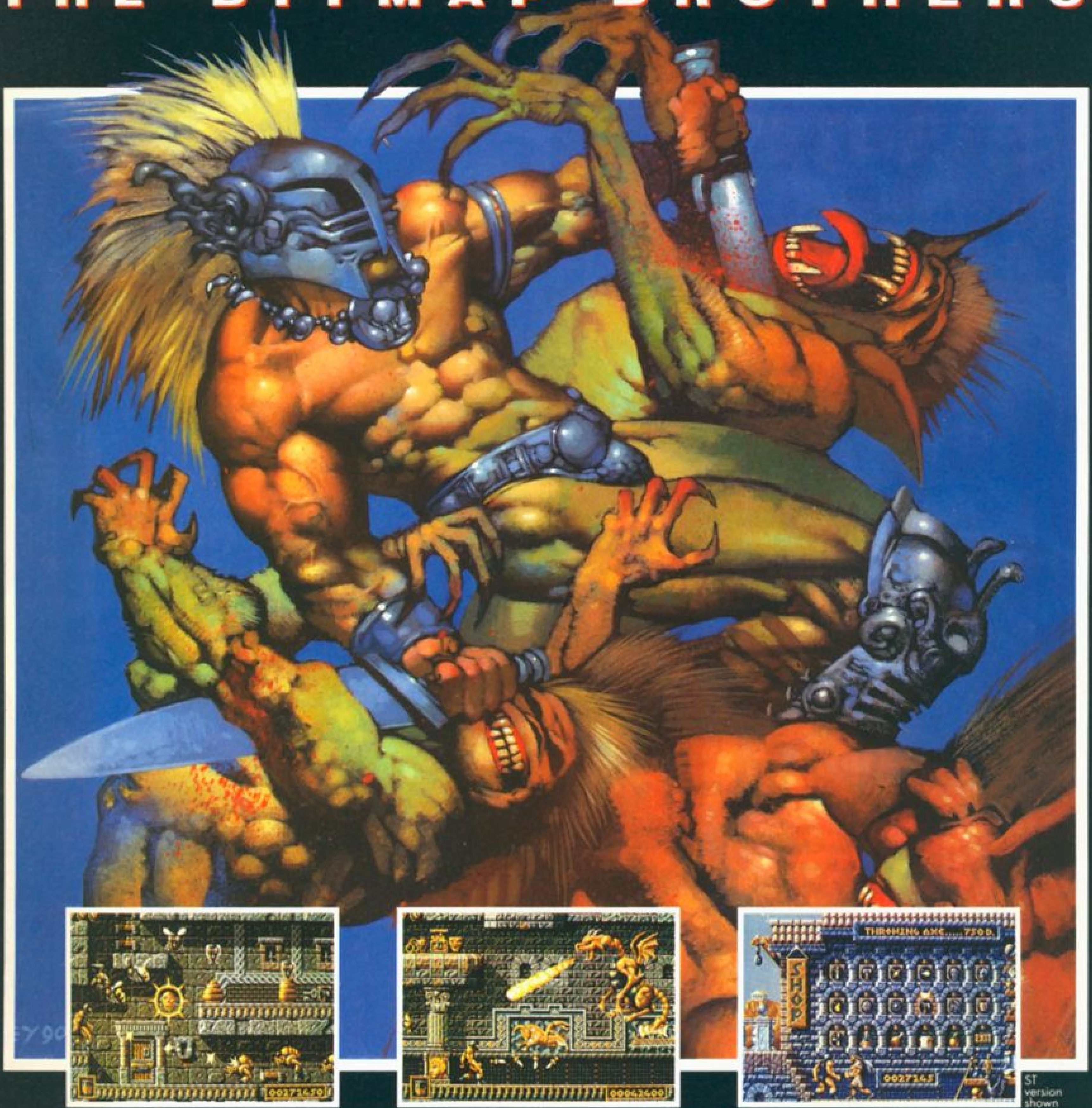
"There's going to be lots and lots of godly effects. Instead of a volcano just going whoosh and appearing, it will rise out of the landscape over a number of games turns, the top will then burst and lava will come pouring down the hill and sweep away everything in its path. When you cast the volcano spell you won't know where the lava will flow. So it could actually blow up all your territories instead of your opponents. New godly effects include tornadoes, typhoons, tidal waves, plagues, pestilence and even some wacky things like rainstorms of frogs and plagues of locusts. We're trying to think of as many effects as possible but a lot of them will have a role-playing type aspect in that you'll only have access to a few of them at the beginning of the world. The idea is that this will encourage people to continue playing to see what the next effect will be. There's not only going to bad godly effects, you'll be able to make land more fertile, clear paths for your people, part the seas, etc."

"There will be three tribes - good, evil and people with no religion. The game will start in a world not unlike Ancient Greece. *Powermonger*'s graphics system was based around vectors whereas *Populous II* will be based around blocks."

"*Populous II* will be faster than the original because it is completely written in assembly language instead of a mix of machine code and 'C'. We're going to try to produce a game which can be used by bulletin boards. *Populous II* should be finished on the Amiga and ST by the end of summer. *Populous II* will be ten times better than the original." Megalomaniacs have never had it so good.

GODS

THE BITMAP BROTHERS



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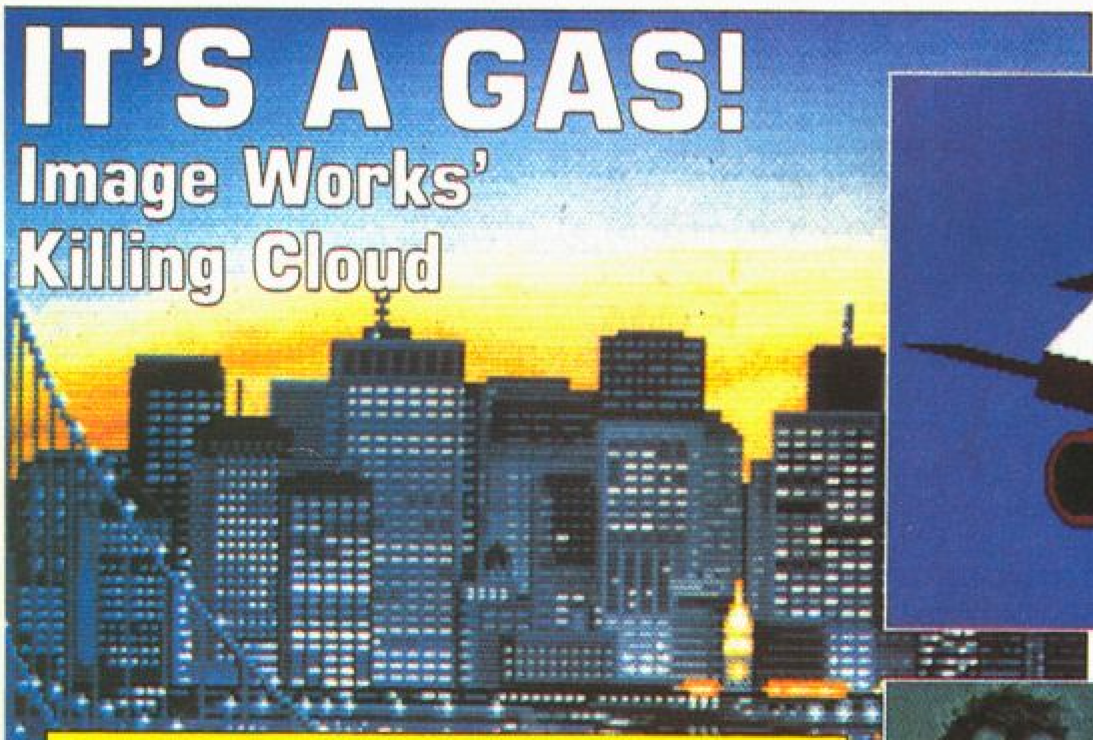

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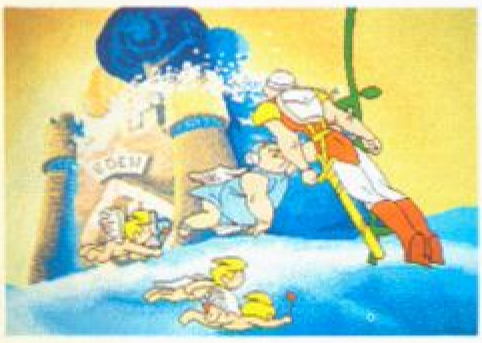
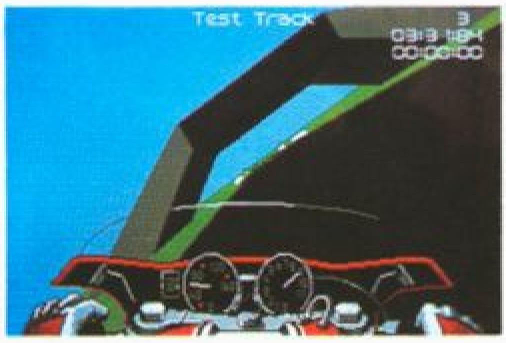


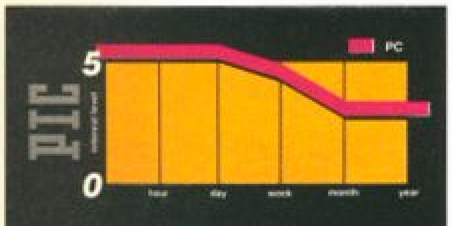
Dragon's Lair II - Time Warp. Still a little lacking on the gameplay front, but still delivers on the visuals.



Team Suzuki is awarded the first ACE Trailblazer on page 48. Get your motor running and head out on the highway.

ACE TRAILBLAZER!

This month sees the first use of our new award, *The ACE Trailblazer.* **Games awarded this coveted recognition of quality must demonstrate either marked innovation or the peak of excellence in their particular field. For example, a shoot-em-up can still win a Trailblazer, but it will have to be an exceptional shoot-em-up.** *Trailblazer* **games will all be essential purchases.**



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve* – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

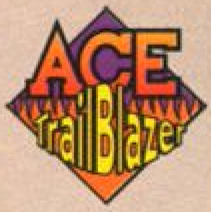
The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

👍	👎
● The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling ● Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room ● Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section	● Limited use of objects ● Over-frequent disk access ● Colour combinations in the bedroom scene

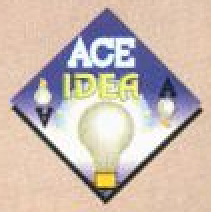
We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished

ACE AWARDS

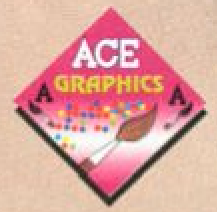
ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!



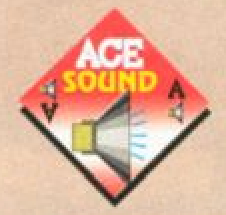
A game will only find itself wearing the Trailblazer if it represents the ultimate stage of development in its particular genre. Games attaining this award are recommended without reservation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.



One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.



Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – bu can make or break them. ACE only awards thi one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

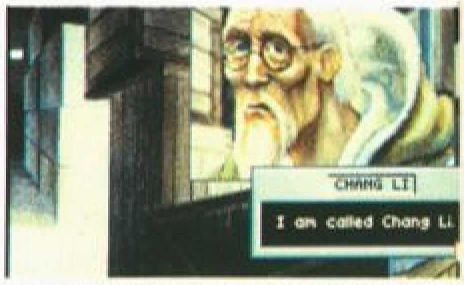
THE LINE UP

ON COMPUTER *pages 44-74*

44 **RISE OF THE DRAGON** *Sierra*
46 **DRAGON'S LAIR** *Empire*
47 **WRATH OF THE DEMON** *Empire*
48 **TEAM SUZUKI** *Gremlin*
48 **MIG 29** *Domark*
49 **HARD DRIVING 2** *Domark*
52 **OBITUS** *Psygnosis*
54 **NIGHT SHIFT***Lucasfilm*
56 **ZARATHRUSTA** *Hewson*
58 **HUNTER** *Activision*
59 **BEAST BUSTERS** *Activision*
60 **CRIME WAVE** *US Gold*
61 **NARC** *Ocean*
63 **BATTLE SQUADRON** *Electronic Arts*
64 **MARIO 4** *Nintendo*
65 **GRADIUS 3** *Konami*

ON CONSOLE *pages 63-66*

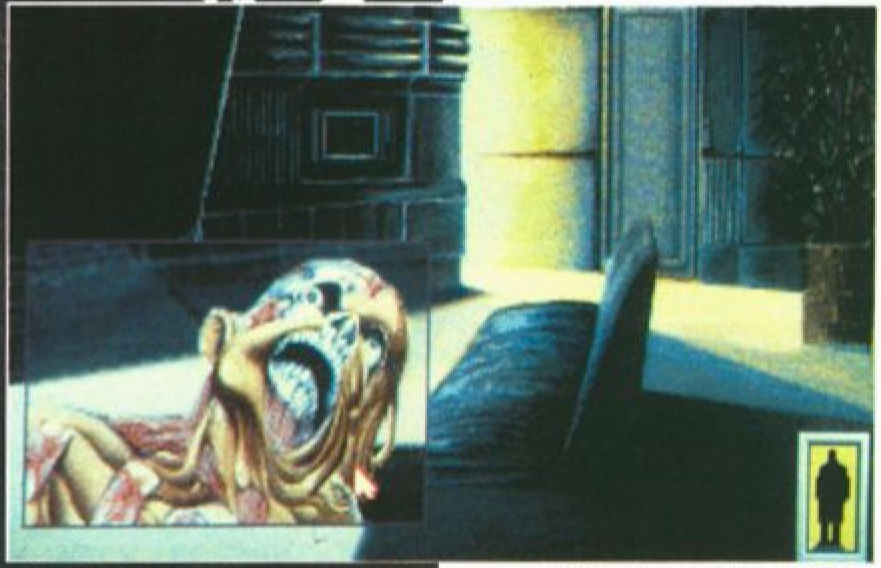
Megadrive ***Battle Squadron*** *from Electronic Arts,* ***Mario 4*** *on the Super*



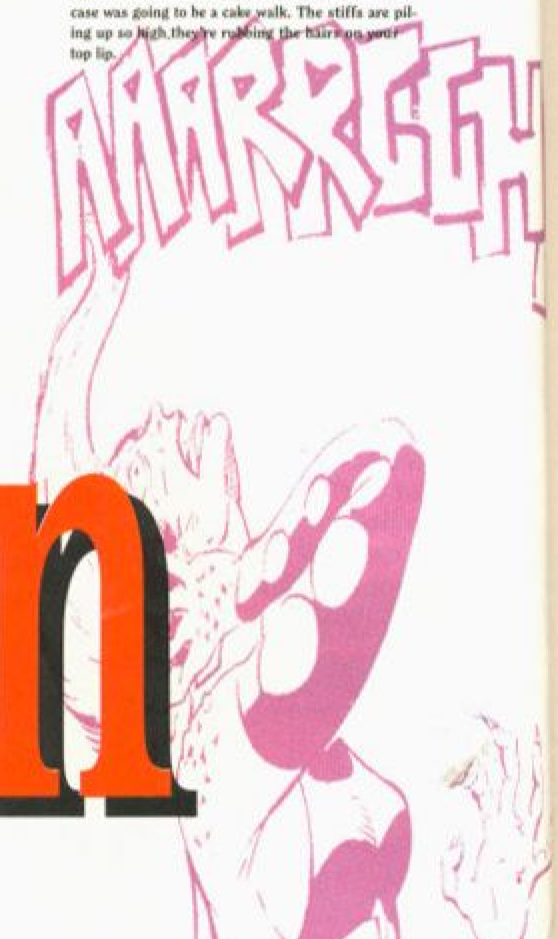
CHANG LI

I am called Chang Li.

You meet the strangest people down by the warehouse. Just what does this enigmatic oriental want, and why is he so keen to offer advice?

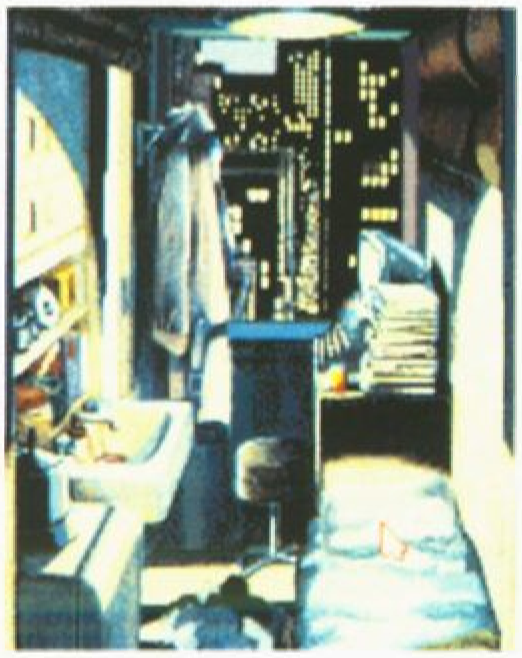


The effects can last forever. No-one said that this case was going to be a cake walk. The stiffs are piling up so high they're rubbing the hairs on your top lip.



A town gone bad. A mayor's daughter on the slab. And a hard-bitten detective out on his own. Private Investigations anyone?

RISE OF THE Dragon



Blade's self-contained apartment. Moving the cursor around the edge of the screen will indicate possible exits. Bottom right is the inventory screen.

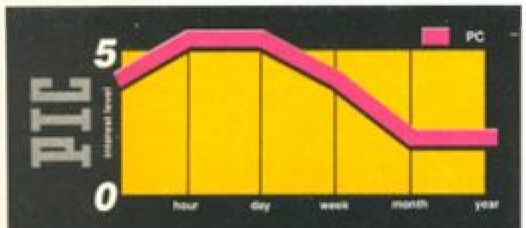
Los Angeles, 2053. Amidst much misery and hardship among the populace, drug abuse is rife. The only people making a decent living are government officials and drug dealers. And the way things stand at the moment, the dealers seem to be having a better time of things. The Mayor's daughter Chandi is dead from an overdose, and the cops are clutching at straws.

William "Blade" Hunter; ex-cop, part time P.I. and full-time cynic has been drafted onto the case. His mission is to untangle this dangerous web of death and deceit and waste the crime lord at its centre.

Rise of the Dragon is an adventure constructed using Dynamix's new game development system. And for the most part it's hugely successful. If you imagine a kind of cross between *Eco Phantoms*, *Loom* and *Indiana Jones*, you'll have a good idea how the control works. There's no typing necessary; everything in the world is controlled by cursor.

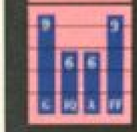
Like any P.I. worth his salt, Blade doesn't even get out of bed until noon. While this is great for the image, it means he's only got half the day left to go to work. Once he's dressed, it's always worth checking his vidphone messages to see what the day holds. In this case, he'll get his first lead; a sleazy character known as The Jake was spotted with Chandi shortly before her death.

Guiding blade out of his apartment (right-clicking when the cursor reads EXIT will describe where the exit leads, and left-clicking will take you there) and down to the Em-way (LA's subway system) is simple enough. From here, you can send



Once object handling has been mastered and you've got your bearings, the plot will draw you in swiftly and continue to offer new developments to keep your interest. However, you'll probably crack the game pretty quickly, after which the interest - although maintained by some alternative solutions - will inevitably fall off.

ACE RATING **850**

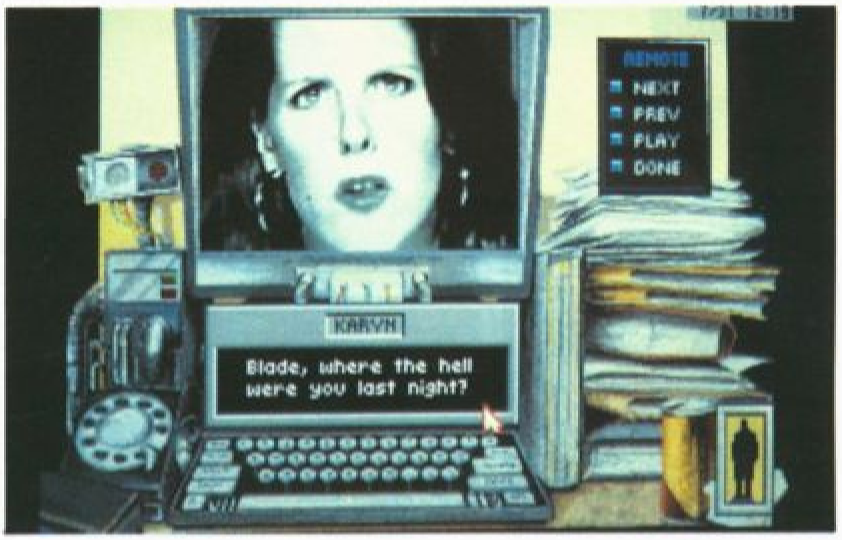


IBM PC

Playing in 256-colour mode makes Rise of the Dragon an amazing game to look at. Hard-disc installation is a must, though, and even some slower machines have their work cut out dealing with the hefty graphics blocks and multi-loads.

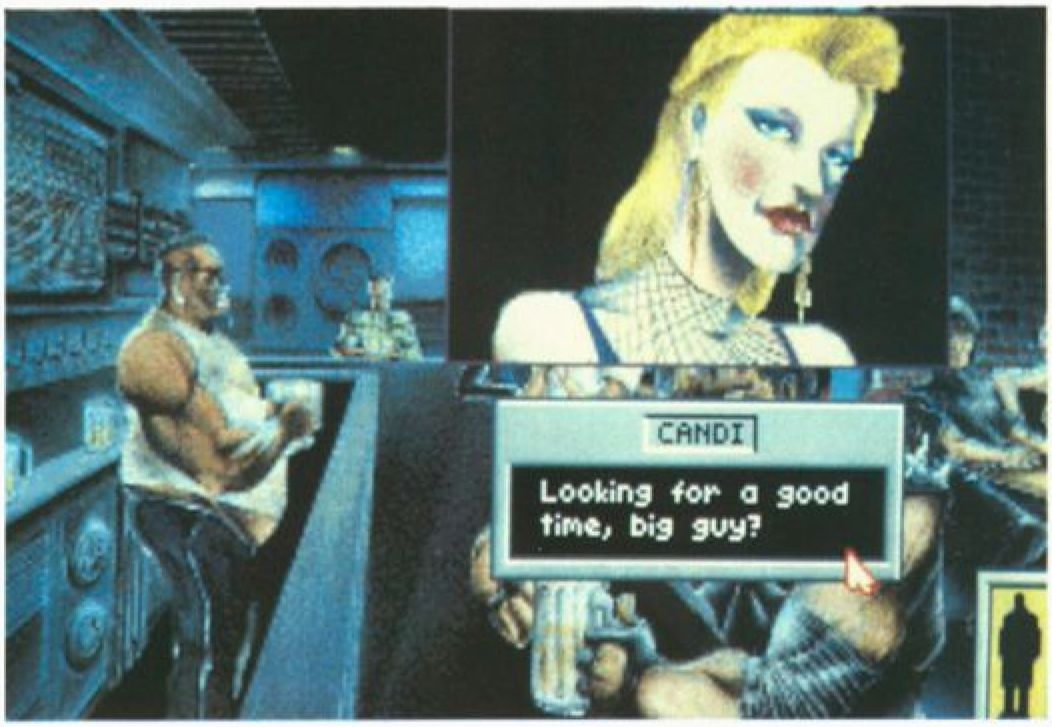
RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	MARCH
ATARI ST	£24.99	MARCH



Blade, where the hell were you last night?

Checking the Vidphone is an essential part of any P.I.'s day. Checking up on other people's messages can be just as informative as looking at your own.



Looking for a good time, big guy?

Conversations with characters can twist and turn. Be prepared to back up hard words with hard actions.

Blade to any destination that he knows of in the city. This is an important point. Unless Blade has come across some information - like someone's address - he won't know how to get to it, and since you view the gameworld through his eyes, it won't show up on the Em-way map.

Before each lead can be successfully investigated, a particular problem must usually be overcome. Offices close at night, for example. Police will show up the most inconvenient times. And the criminals won't slow their fiendish plans while you catch up.

The basic framework of the game involves a lot of legwork. Successful interrogation of a character will usually yield some sort of lead. Although controlled by multiple-choice selections, your interaction with the characters is reasonably subtle, allowing a lot of object-swapping, and good level of conversation-branching. Characters will behave according to your treatment of them. In most situations, you can play Blade as either a gun-toting thug, a straight-arrow or a sleazy greaseball. Continually threatening to push peoples' faces inside out will eventually have to be backed up by action.

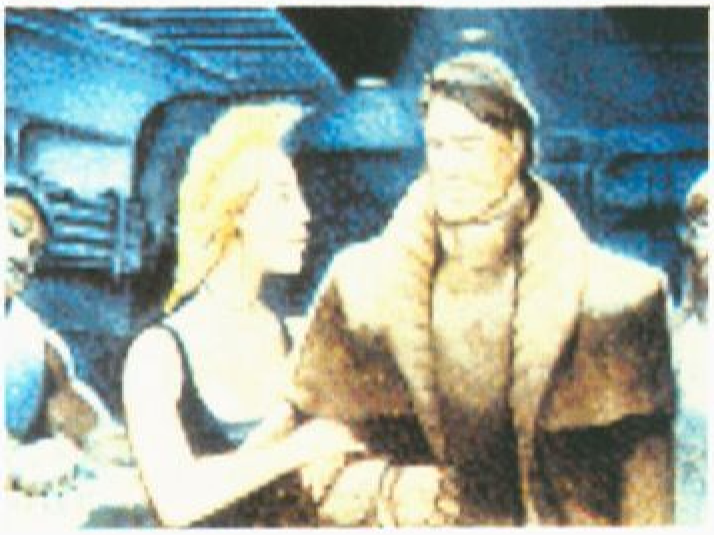
The biggest problem with *Rise of the Dragon* is that it's a bit easy. A few concerted attempts and you'll have the case sewn up. However, it has a number of facts in its favour. For a start, it's fascinating to play. In every situation, there's always something new to try. The graphics are superb. You can either play in 2, 16 or 256 colours. Obviously, the higher the capabilities of your machine, the better the game looks. Monochrome is a bit dodgy, 16 is fine and 256 is absolutely beautiful.

Another reason for its relative ease is a testimony of the thoughtfulness of the story design. In order to give a filmic quality to the way the game progresses, Blade won't hit any real dead ends. Whereas most adventures will regularly kill off the hero from the word go, Blade has a pretty safe time unless he does anything desperately silly. In the latter part of the game, however, the action escalates and more care must be taken.

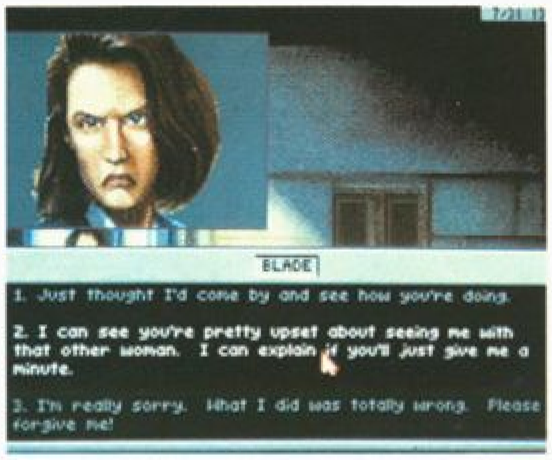
Also included are two arcade sequences which play during combat with the bad guys at the the end of the game. The difficulty of these sections can be tailored to suit your preferences, and even skipped through if you're really not an arcade person.

Apart from the longevity question, *Rise of the Dragon* is an excellent game. It's fun to play, easy to get into and it also has some genuine pace, a factor that sets it above most adventures on the market. Sierra's next game using their new system could be a masterpiece.

● **Jim Douglas**



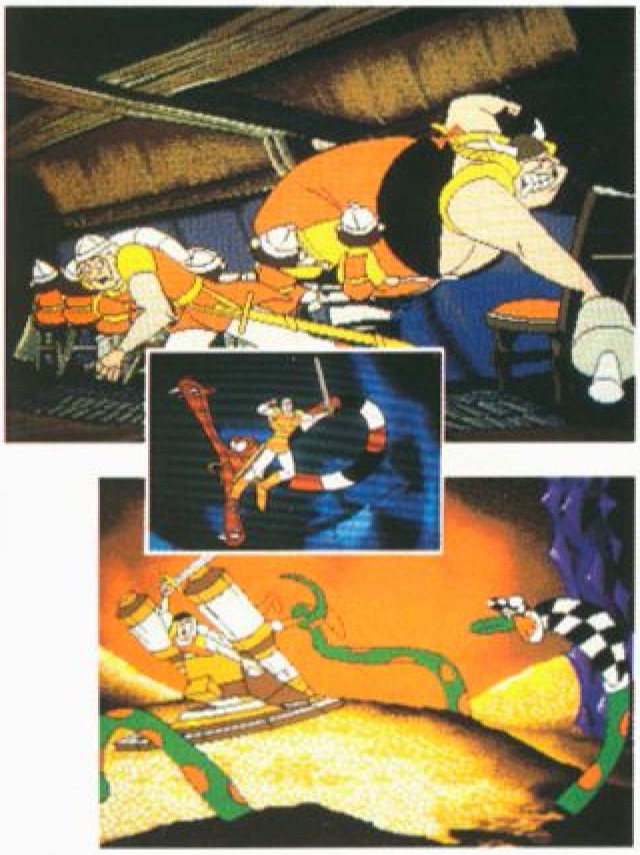
...And it looks as if hard action is what you're about to get! Is she really as friendly as she seems?



1. Just thought I'd come by and see how you're doing.
2. I can see you're pretty upset about seeing me with that other woman. I can explain if you'll just give me a minute.
3. I'm really sorry. What I did was totally wrong. Please forgive me!

The price of infidelity. Your old flame is none too pleased with the comapny you've been keeping of late.

Run for your wife! Daphne's mum 'encourages' you to rescue her beloved daughter...



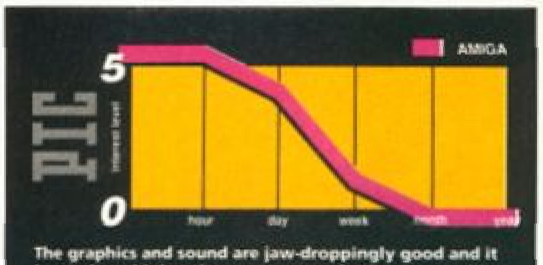
...The nearby ruins of Singe's castle prove no sanctuary from trouble because this snake is certainly no charmer...

...Deeper into the castle and another snake - plus a talking time machine! Now to rescue Daphne (?)...

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, DIRKY?

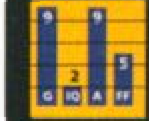
Those unfamiliar with Readysoft's interactive cartoons may be wondering how they work. It's really quite simple. An animated sequence is played showing Dirk in a perilous scrape. You must decide how and when Dirk will react and use your joystick accordingly, pushing up, down, left or right to move or pressing fire to use the sword. The wrong move or timing results in a short death scene and the loss of one of your three lives. Get it right and the main sequence continues.

The problem is that you are not truly interacting with a cartoon at all, more being guided along a plot route decided by the programmers - and it's not always obvious what that route is from what you see. For example, in the first scene Dirk is being attacked by his mother-in-law. You must push left to jump out of the way. However, there's no good reason why you couldn't jump to the right or back, or even use your sword (not that Daphne would be too pleased with you hacking apart her relatives!) except that the programmers don't want you to. The game can often boil down to a lot of tedious and unrewarding testing of every possible move until the correct one is found.



The graphics and sound are jaw-droppingly good and it has to be said that the urge to see what's next provides a reasonably strong incentive to play. However, it's not going to take too long to complete if you really put your mind to it (not that much of a mind is required). If you're only after the game because you want to show off the graphics and sound capabilities of your Amiga or Atari ST then buy the PD demo and save yourself forty-odd quid.

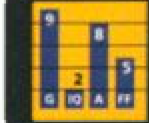
ACE RATING
694



AMIGA

So what's new? Granted, there are more scenes and bigger animated images this time around, but it's basically more of the same - stunning to look at and listen to but the shallow and limited gameplay means the only skill needed to complete the game is dogged perseverance. Lair fans will no doubt lap this one up with enthusiasm. The non-committed will remain skeptical.

ACE RATING
688



ATARI ST

Not quite as impressive as its Amiga cousin. The graphic colours are not as subtle (although they are on the STE which uses the 4096 colour palette) and the screen update is slightly slower, which detracts from the cartoon look of the game but does give you a better chance of timing your moves correctly. The sound samples are substantially quieter and of a lower quality, but still very good. However, the gameplay is unchanged (more's the pity).

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£44.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£44.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£44.95	OUTNOW
MACINTOSH	TBA	TBA

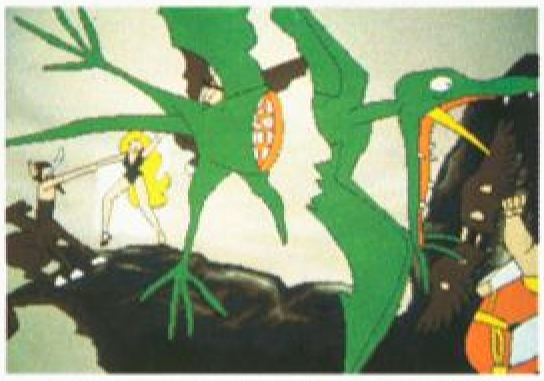
No other versions planned

DRAGON'S LAIR II: *TIME WARP*

Singe may have been slain, but now there's a new dragon in town... Dirk's mother-in-law! Princess Daphne has been kidnapped by the wizened and wicked Mordroc, who has hidden her in a wrinkle in time. Inspired by his love for Daphne and the size of his mother-in-law's rolling pin, Dirk must overcome ravenous snakes, living skulls, giant pterodactyls, camp angels and Mordroc himself to rescue her in this rollicking (and expensive) romp through the halls of time!

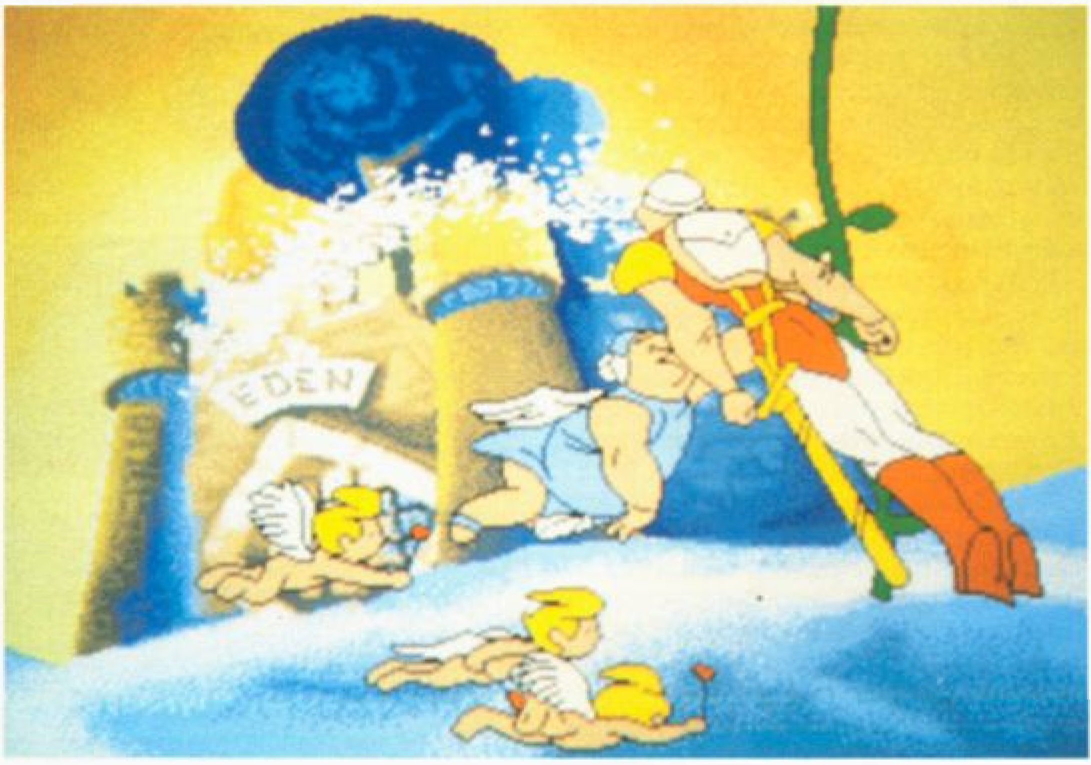
● **David Upchurch**

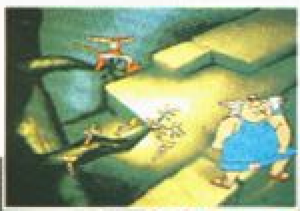
READYSOFT/EMPIRE's latest graphic extravaganzas: Will Dirk dare to be different in *Dragon's Lair II* ? Or will *Wrath of the Demon* steal his thunder?



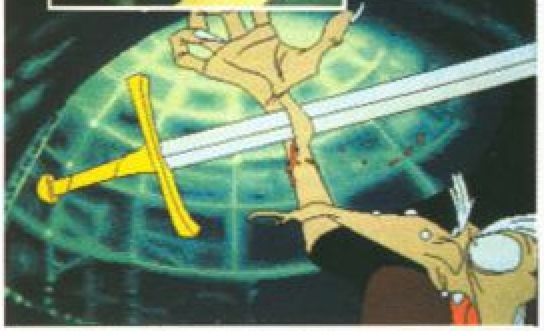
...Gloink! One trip through time later and Dirk finds he's prehistory! He's never one to do things by halves! Look! Those hoofed gents have your beloved...

...Zoooooiiiing!!! Through time again to the Gates of Eden. "Go away, no visitors!" minces the blue-rinsed angel...

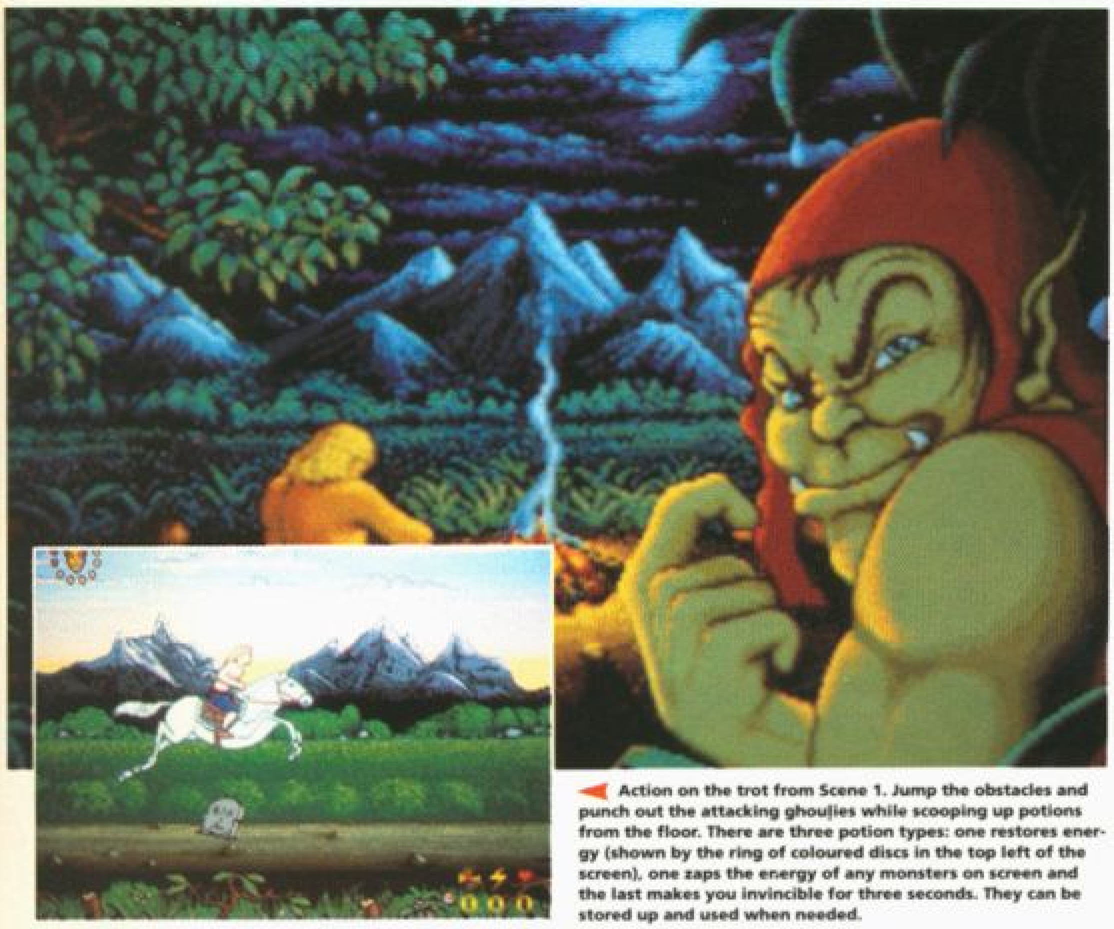




...Dirk makes good his escape while the chief angel goes wild. Wild? I was *livid*, darling...

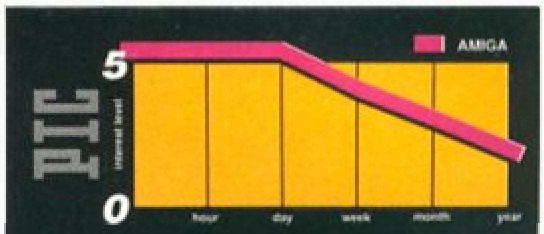


...One last trip and you find Mordroc, who is just about to put the Ring of Death on Daphne's finger which will make her forever his! In desperation you throw your sword at the arch villain, piercing his arm. But the battle is just beginning...



The graphic prelude to the second Scene. Is that a goblin or has he just got a headache?

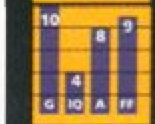
Action on the trot from Scene 1. Jump the obstacles and punch out the attacking ghoulies while scooping up potions from the floor. There are three potion types: one restores energy (shown by the ring of coloured discs in the top left of the screen), one zaps the energy of any monsters on screen and the last makes you invincible for three seconds. They can be stored up and used when needed.



Great to look at and great to play. The many levels of action should provide an enjoyably long-lasting challenge.

ACE RATING

884



AMIGA

Demon is an obvious challenger to *Beast 2*, and in this monster mash *Demon* wins hands down. The intro has to be the best ever seen on the Amiga. The in-game presentation is stunning, with umpteen layers of parallax and a cartoony and appealing graphic style. But (thankfully) it's far more than just a pretty face. The game tasks are fun and, although mainly hack 'n' slay, reasonably varied.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£29.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£29.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW
MACINTOSH	£29.99	OUT NOW
C64	TBA	TBA

No other versions planned

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Put simply, the plot is this: You play a warrior sent to slay a Demon threatening your King's realm. Why the manual can't just come out and say this is a complete mystery. Instead, you get a load of old guff about some wizard called Anthrax (?!), a faery having a bad dream and a murdered King's messenger - it's all far too convoluted to explain here. I suppose it's meant to generate 'atmosphere'

Thing is, it's not really needed - there's a truly marvellous intro which creates bags of atmosphere all by itself. I know you read this every month but it really is something special and uses animation techniques reminiscent of the classic Disney cartoons. At natural breaks in the game there are well-drawn pictures and text explaining the progress in the plot.

The game is made up of a series of 'scenes', each of which contains some sort of task to be completed and, while they are not outstandingly original, they are sufficiently varied to prevent any boredom setting in. The size and animation of all the characters is superlative - the galloping horse and the hilariously goggle-eyed dragon are particularly memorable.

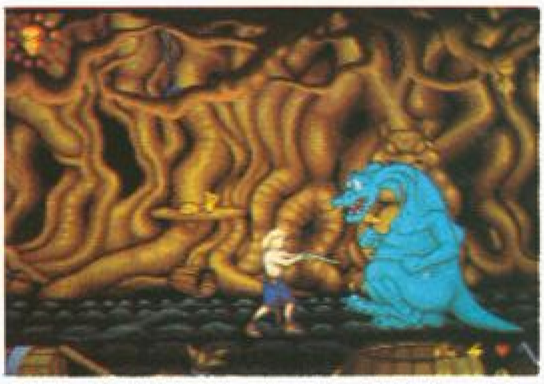
The scrolling levels feature numerous levels of parallax which create a great feeling of depth. David Whittaker's soundtracks are fine but not outstanding - they're very reminiscent of *Beast 2*, in fact. Technically, this has to be the most accomplished and polished game yet written for the Amiga.

Thankfully, the programmers Abstrax have also spent a bit of time on the gameplay. All controls are responsive and the game tasks are entertaining. A stunning game that not only looks fantastic and sounds great but plays well too.

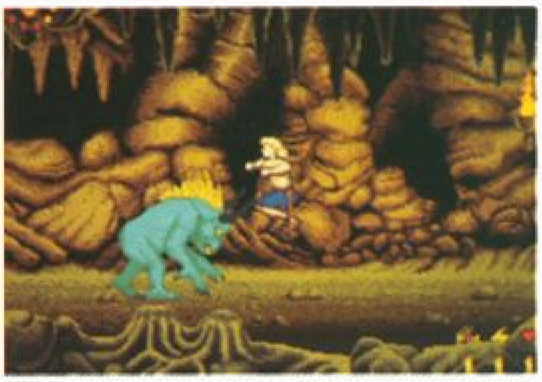
● **David Upchurch**

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THOSE SPECS!

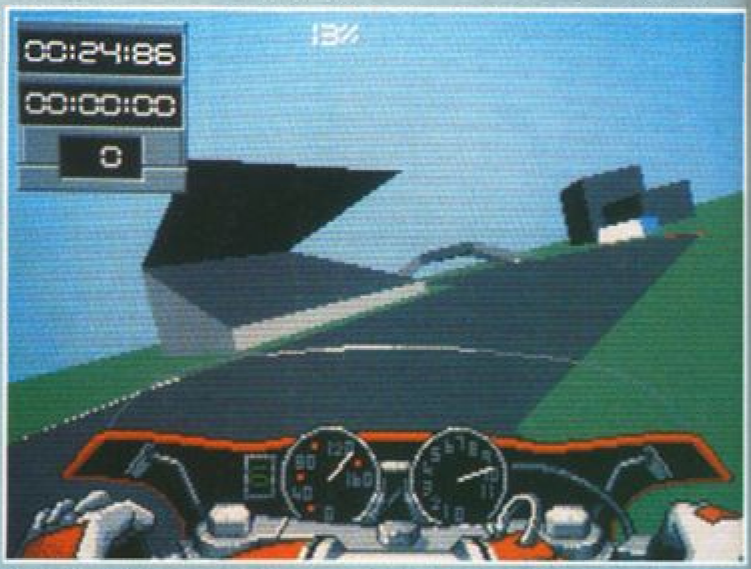
WARNING! Techies of a weak disposition should stop reading now!
The programming team behind the fan-tabulous graphics in *Wrath of the Demon* are Pierre Proulx, Claude Pelletier and Martin Ross, who call themselves Abstrax and are based across the Big Pond in Quebec, Canada. The game was developed over 10 months and comes on four discs, needed to store the 3.5 Mb of graphics data and 600K of sound data. The action is accompanied by 9 different sound tracks (written by David Whittaker) with the music samples recorded at 20 kHz. On your quest through the 600 screens of action you'll meet 120 different monsters, with the biggest being a whopping 300 x 144 pixels!



The dragon's lair! Now where have I heard that before...?



Yaaaagh! You'll jump out of your skin when confronted by this horny little devil on a trek through some underground caves in Scene 4.



Practise laps help get to grips with the behaviour of the bike. It's best to hit the inside of the corner when you're half way round and then gruadually slide out to the outside.

ACE TrailBlazer

TEAM SUZUKI

With sixteen international race circuits, computerised versions of the top riders in the world, and a brand new super-fast polygon routine, GREMLIN must be onto a winner...

Team Suzuki offers the player the chance to pit their simulated motorcycle prowess against some of the best riders in the world, racing around real tracks too. And thanks to some excellent programming and thoughtful control methods, it manages to be both easy to pick up and genuinely realistic.

The game contains the a whole race season, across 16 international circuits and you can play right through from start to finish if you've got the staying power (and the ability). More advisable in the early stages of play, though, is to put in a lot of practise. Even with three different control options available (joystick or 2 mouse settings) and three engine sizes at your fingertips, it will take a good while to accustom yourself to the behaviour of the bike.

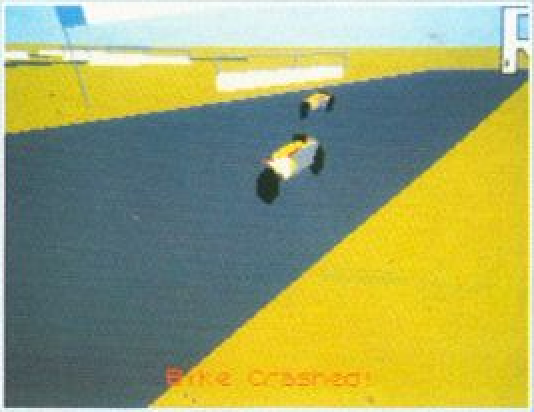
125cc race bikes are a breed apart from their road-going equivalent. When pushed, you can achieve a clean 120mph from their howling little powerplants. It's best to get to grips with the rudiments of bike handling and track etiquette on a machine of this size, since these bikes (in the game) have automatic gearing.

Once you're happy with the extreme degrees of leaning necessary to get around some corners at speed, it's possible to work on faster lap times and picking your best "line".

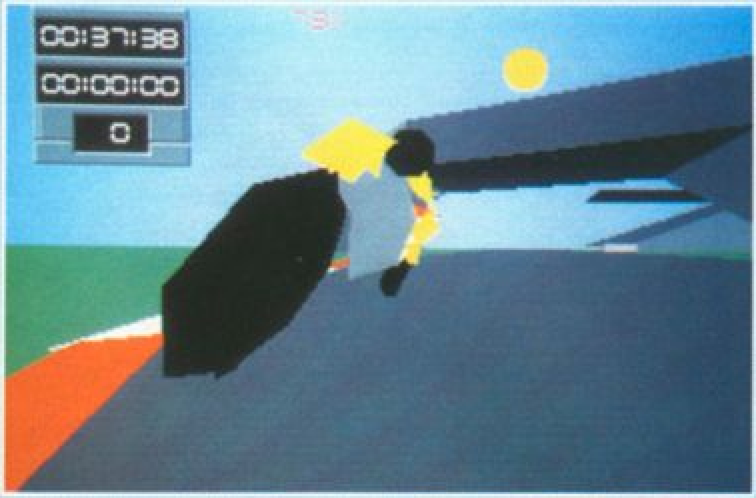
Unlike the real thing, the *Team Suzuki* bikes will never fall over. However, every time they leave the circuit they will incur some damage. Reach 100% damage and your bike will gracefully lie down and die. Damage points are also amassed by bumping into other bikes and trackside objects.

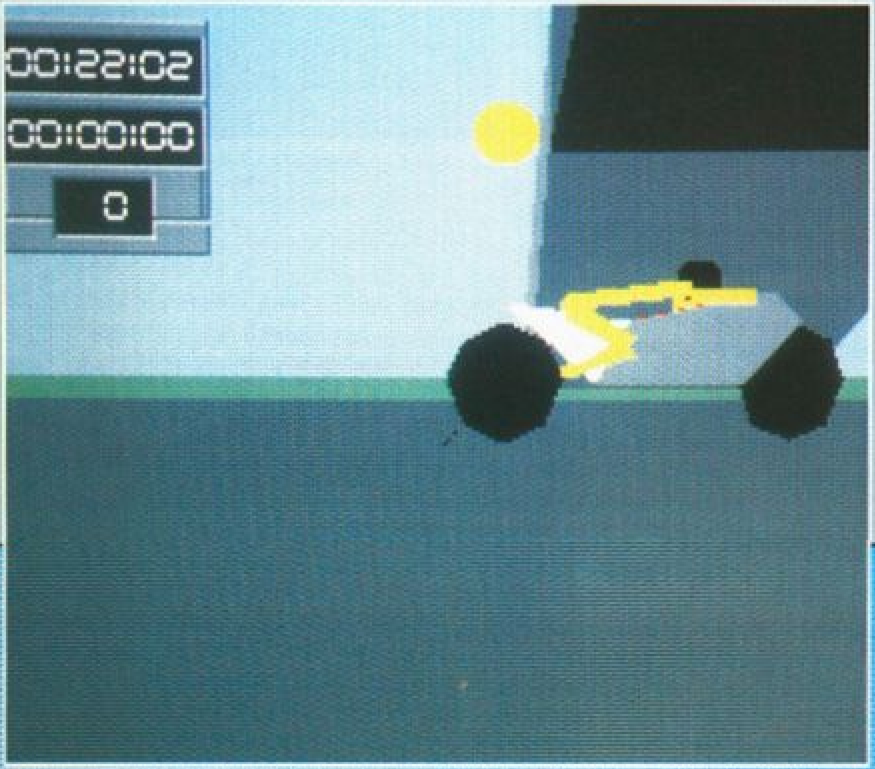
By the time you can complete a couple of laps without your damage reaching 50%, chances are you're ready to race. Qualifying for a race involves completing three laps of the appropriate circuit (unless competing in the World Championship, you can ride any circuit at any time). Your lap times will determine your position

On the grid. Your prowess during the qualifying laps determines your position.

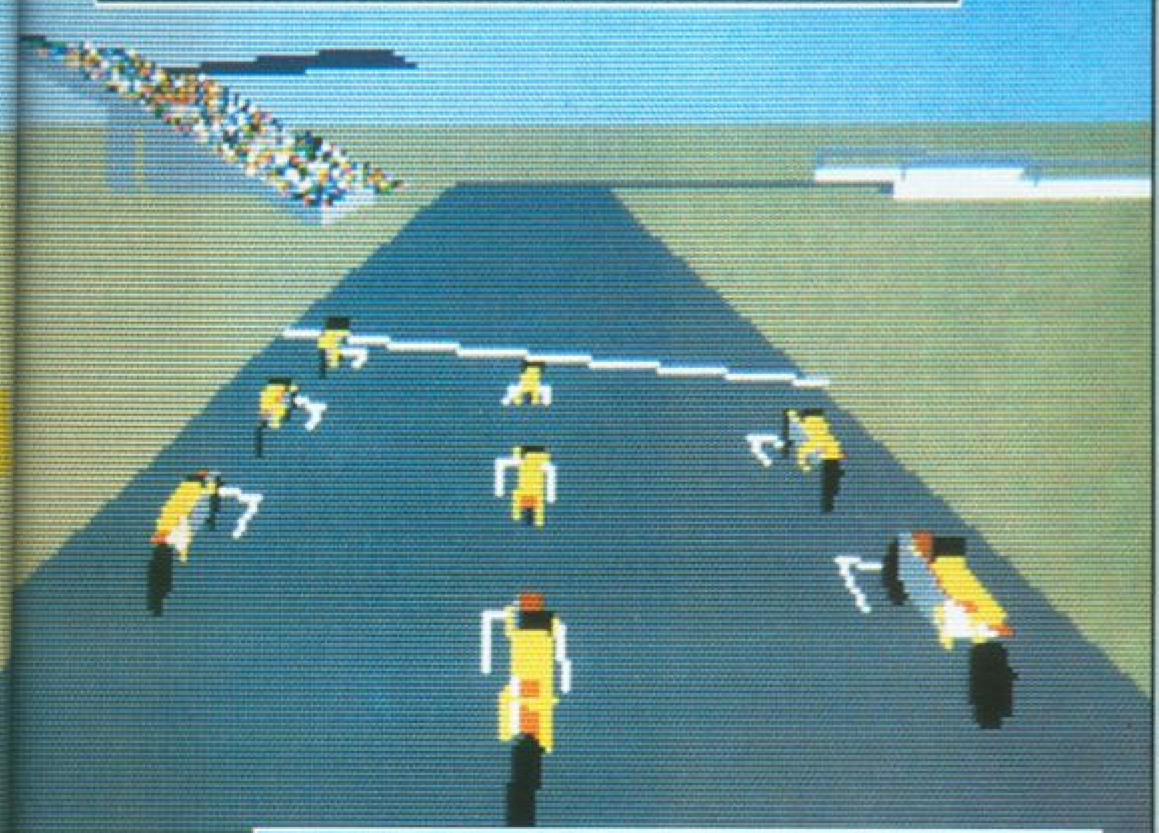


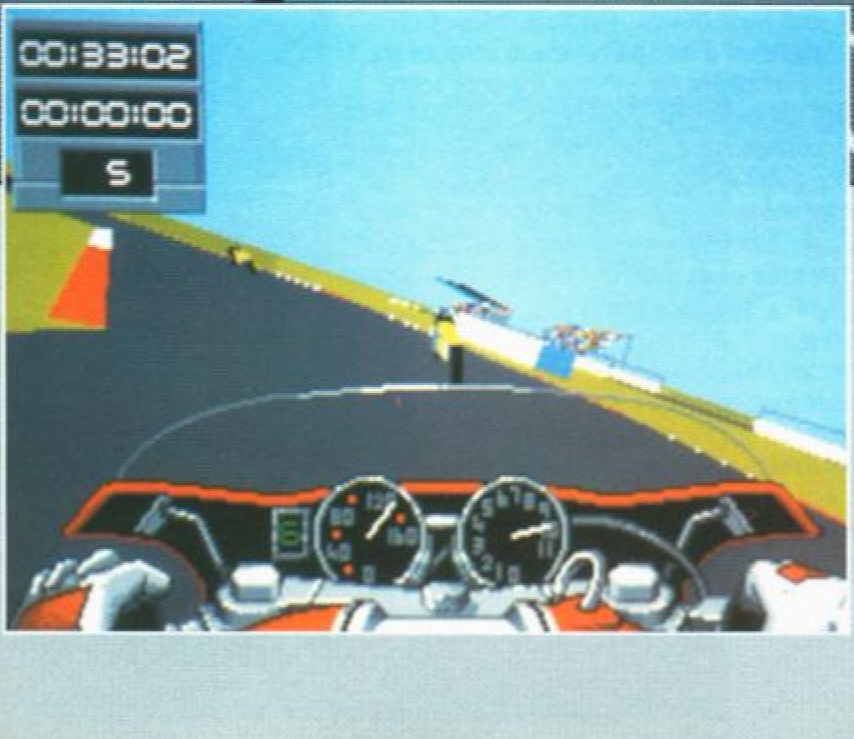
During practise, you can view the bike from virtually any angle. Actually riding while viewing the world like this is far from easy.





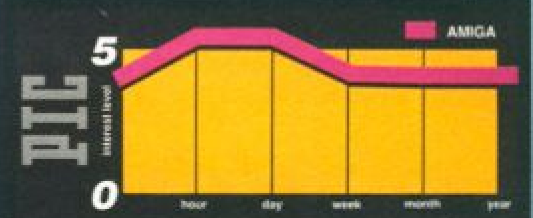
Polygon riders can be switched off to speed up the frame rate if you desire.





Chasing other bikes is a dangerous business. Taking a cavalier approach to overtaking will surely see you off the track.

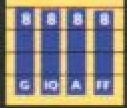
Your final few seconds of each race can be viewed through the trackside replay camera. Useful hints can be gleaned by checking your track position before the crash.



Initial impressions are extremely good, with the slickness of the 3D world overriding the fact that you spend the first hour crashing the bike. After then, there's a minor frustration stage while you master bike control. Once out the other side of this dip, though, it's a straight run for Suzuki.

ACE RATING

900



AMIGA

Super-slick graphics and a genuine impression of actually riding the bike. A breakdown of the individual courses as the camera zooms in onto the track offers useful hints and the extra-graphics on/off option offers even more speed.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

on the grid in the main race. Even if you fail to complete the qualifying laps, you can still race, but you'll start in last place.

Unlike most racing games where you can work your way up through the other competitors with relative ease, overtaking in Suzuki is far from a formality. Since all the computer controlled riders will automatically keep as close to the perfect line as possible, the only way you can get around them is to take a route other than the optimum, losing precious seconds if you make a mistake.

During practise, you can view your bike from five different angles, each infinitely definable by rotating and elevating the camera. While racing, though, you can only view from the rider's point of view, from behind the bike and over the back of the bike.

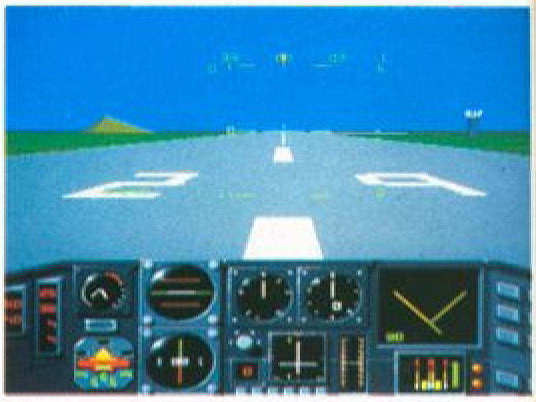
To speed up the already swift frame-rate, you can opt to turn off the other riders (resulting in ghost-bikes) and also do away with the bike's instrument panel and handlebars.

For anyone with more than a passing interest in either motorbikes or what can be done with a decent polygon system, *Team Suzuki* is an essential purchase.

● **Jim Douglas**

MiG-29
FULCRUM

It might be built from transistors and chewing-gum, but the MiG-29 Fulcrum is a fiercesome fighting aircraft. ACE takes DOMARK's simulator for a spin.


Prepare for take-off. Ground detail is pretty minimal, and there's no increase in speed to compensate.

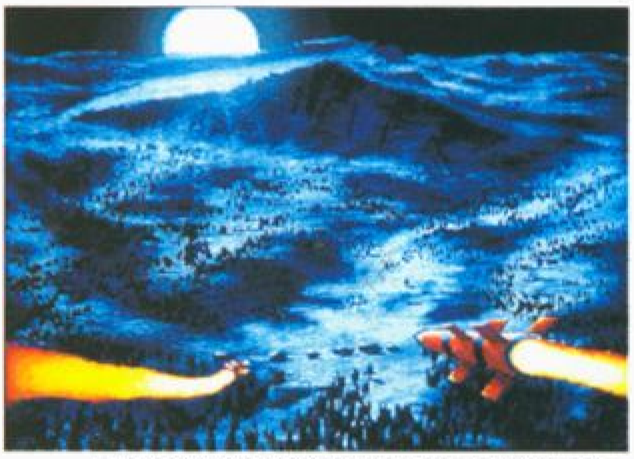
Despite its relatively primitive technology, the MiG-29 Fulcrum is one of the best fighting aircraft in the world, so there's plenty of potential in this first-ever flight sim from Domark.

Unfortunately you couldn't call the Amiga version more than adequate; despite the giant box, the 129-page full-colour book on the MiG-29, the extensive manual and the fold-out poster, the most important part of the package, the game itself, doesn't impress.

Things start fairly well with a grungy heavy metal intro tune (it's not very Russian, though), followed by a title screen showing the MiG flying over the Kremlin. It's downhill from there, as the opening screen of the game, showing a bleak office with an overhead projector displaying a list of missions, is unintentionally hilarious - the pilot in the background looks constipated and his commander clutching a clipboard has a peculiarly deformed hand (too much cheap vodka, perhaps).

You select a mission from the six available, one of which is a training flight where a crash returns you to the runway (in other missions, a crash is fatal).

The five genuine mission scenarios include sub-hunting in the Arctic, dogfighting with Chinese fighters over the Great Wall, attacking bridges, trucks and SAMs on the ground, and a final multi-role scenario destroying a nuclear power plant in the desert (topical or what!). You have to accumulate 500 points before tackling the final mission.


Each mission briefing is preceded by an attractive illustrative screen. Here a small town nestling in the Siberian mountains is under attack from enemy missiles. Your mission is to find the silos and destroy 'em.

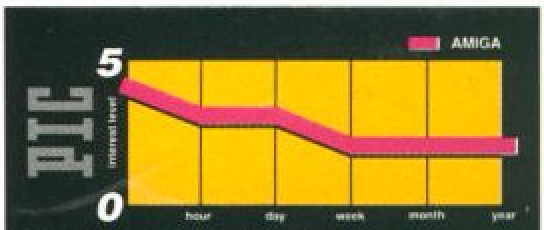
Although the cockpit interior appears to be an accurate depiction of the inside of a MiG, it's not too exciting. Systems such as radar, altimeter, head-up display, weapon selection and engine controls are all familiar from many other flight sims, and you have a choice of keyboard, mouse, joystick or analogue joystick controls. I found the plane hard to keep in steady flight using a mouse, so the automatic level flight control is useful.

Although you get a lovely picture depicting each mission scenario before it starts, the out-of-cockpit graphics are on the minimal side; deserts, ice fields or night landscapes according to mission. Using the numeric pad keys you can alter your angle of view, eliminate the control panel or select a third-party view to enhance the game, but nothing will enhance the poor sound except turning it off.

According to test pilot John Farley, performance accurately represents that of the genuine article, and here we have to defer to experience. You have a small choice of weapons - cannon, and air-to-air or air-to-ground missiles - but the dogfighting sequences are too slow to be really exciting.

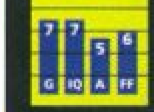
Overall, *MiG-29 Fulcrum* is a bit of a cabbage. It might look good from the screenshots, but the limited action, restricted scenarios, and lack of expandability through extra mission disks, make you ask yourself what is the point of producing a merely adequate sim when there are several excellent ones already on the market.

● **Chris Jenkins**



The intro screens and graphics displays are pretty impressive, but in the areas of depth and variation it's a disappointment. It takes more than a competent simulation to compete in a crowded market, and MiG-29 doesn't make enough of the opportunities offered

ACE RATING
750



AMIGA

Though it's only slightly slower than other Amiga flight sims, that little makes a lot of difference. The backgrounds aren't very detailed, and though still screenshots of enemy aircraft and ground objects look impressive, in flight the impression isn't so great. Control isn't particularly easy - with the mouse, at least - and the biggest disappointment is the sound, which after the theme tune is minimal. Competent, but not everything it could be.

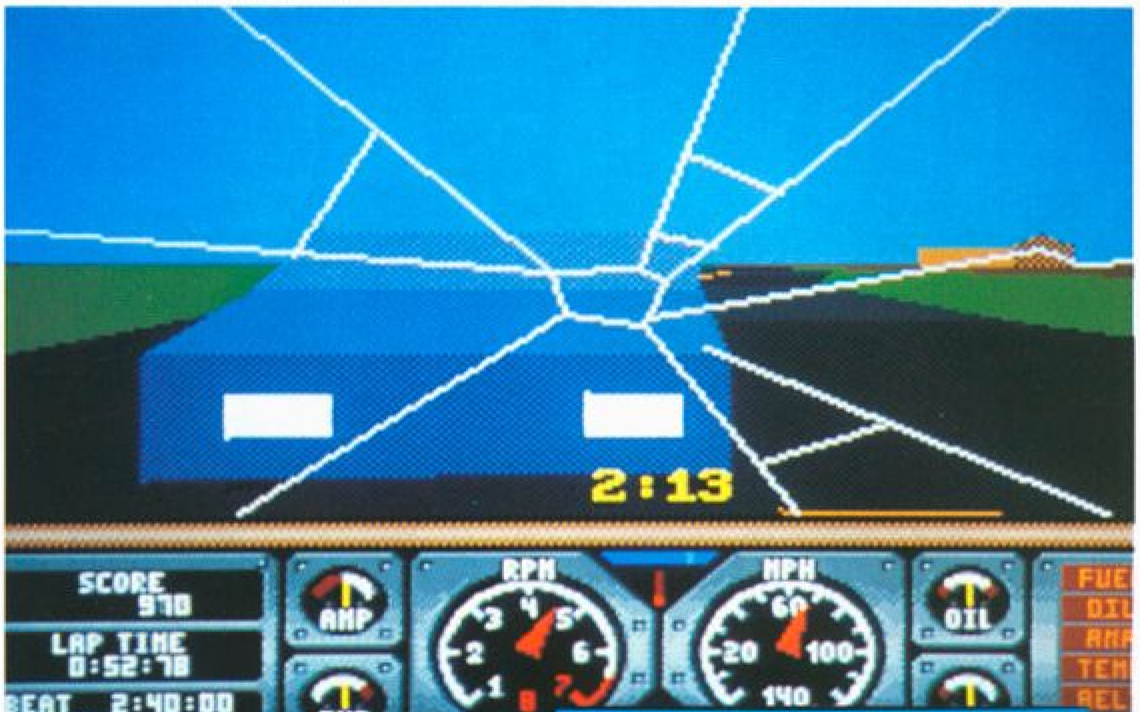
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£34.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£34.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£39.99	OUT NOW

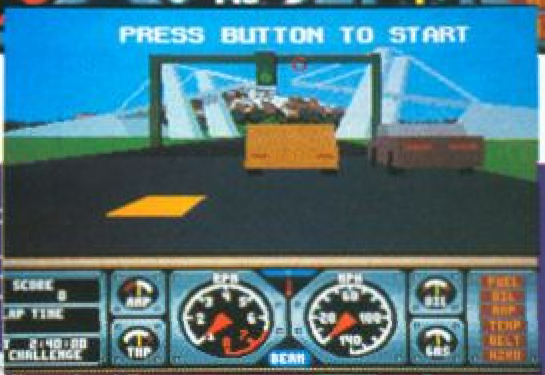
Is *Hard Driving 2* a true sequel or are DOMARK 'clutch'-ing at straws?

It's always nice to see a software company continuing to update their product after release. Buy something like a word-processor and you get such updates for free, but if we're talking about a game, it's galling to be asked for another wad of cash for a supposed sequel which is in many ways just a 'bug-fixed' version of the original.

It has to be said that *Hard Driving 2 - Drive Harder* is a fine game (though you shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that the guy in the driving helmet is Bruce Willis). Based on an impressive coin-op, it uses filled-vector graphics to create a series of realistic driving courses complete with death-defying stunt obstacles. The result is a unique cross between a racing game and a flight simulator.


2:13
SCORE 970
LAP TIME 0:52:78
BEAT 2:40:00 TO CHALLENGE
AMP
TMP
RPM
MPH
OIL
FUEL
OIL
AMP
TEMP
BELT
NZRO

Remember that you're not driving in France and try to keep on the right side of the road. No, no, when I say right I mean the left, I... Look out!


PRESS BUTTON TO START
SCORE
LAP TIME
2:40:00 CHALLENGE
RPM
MPH
BEAM

On the starting grid. Recognise that broken bridge in the distance? Yep, it's back from the original and it's still a swine to [illegible]

HARD DRIVING 2
DRIVE HARDER

Initially there are five courses to choose from, though the icon-driven track designer means that you can edit them to suit your taste, or create your own courses from scratch, defining your own lap time values, restart points and so on. You have a wide range of control options including mouse, joystick or keyboard, and several combinations of the two. You might like to start with automatic gear changing, and work up to manual shift as your performance improves.

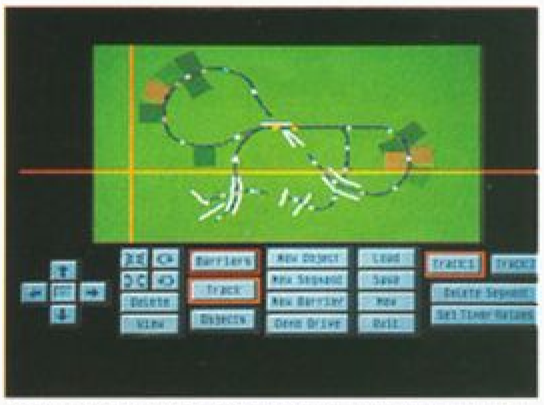
The full 3-D view track is surrounded by realistic objects such as road signs, houses, barriers, and even cows (!?). Some objects are obstacles, others are just decoration, but the stunt sections such as loops and jumps have to be taken seriously.

Performance is realistic - take a curve too fast and you start skidding convincingly - and the speed of the whole game is slightly faster than that of the original, which is a welcome improvement.

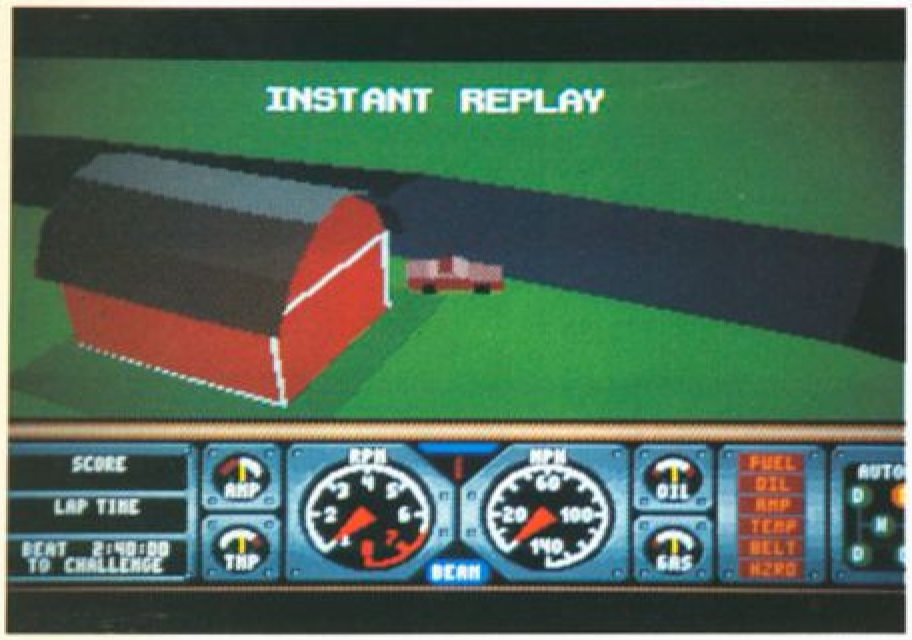
Other improvements include auto-centering of the steering, improved visibility check (other cars no longer appear through mountains!) and a two-machine link-up. In this mode any combination of PC, Amiga and ST can be linked together via RS-232, and you can race head-to-head without collision detection, or in a standard race with collision detection and a drone car.

If you want a truly different race game, try *Hard Driving 2*. Trouble is, it's most likely to appeal to people who already have the original *Hard Driving*, and they might not think the minor improvements are worth the money. A case *for* an upgrade offer, Domark?

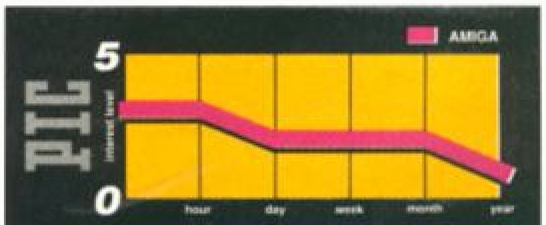
● **Chris Jenkins**


Barriers
Track
Objects
New Object
New Segment
New Barrier
Demo Drive
Load
Save
New
Quit
Delete
View
Track1
Delete Segment
Set Timer Values

The versatile and (after a little practice) easy-to-use track editor. Invent a real toughy, then invite a cocky *Hard Drivin'* mate to see how good he or she really is.


INSTANT REPLAY
SCORE
LAP TIME
BEAT 2:40:00 TO CHALLENGE
AMP
TMP
RPM
MPH
OIL
GAS
BEAM
FUEL
OIL
AMP
TEMP
BELT
NZRO
AUTO

Crash and you'll get an instant replay of the tragic event from a flying camera. Here you're just about to have a bit of a barney with a barn.



The car takes a little while to get a hang of, but fortunately the improved control options mean the learning curve isn't as frustratingly high as the original. The extra courses and the option to design your own courses add longevity to an excellent product.

ACE RATING
820

G	IQ	A	FF
8	7	8	8

AMIGA

Congratulations to Domark on improving the performance of this good-looking racing game. The speed of the original was a slight problem, but here it has been increased to do justice to the fine graphics and animation. However, this isn't enough of a revision to qualify as a different game. The question has to be - wouldn't it have been better to hold off on the first *Hard Driving* until this improved version was ready for release?

RELEASE DETAILS

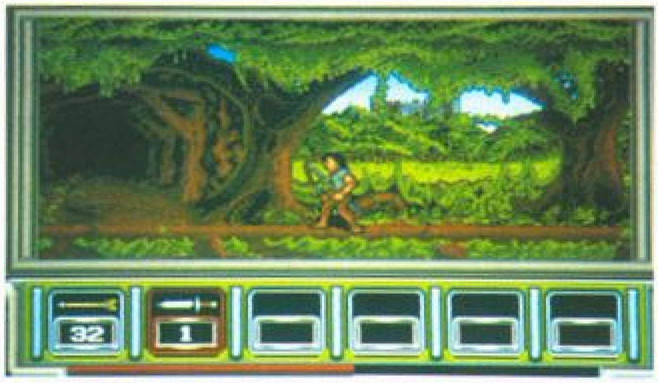
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW

Obitus

PSYGNOSIS release an RPG - but with arcade sequences?!?!

What a strange brew! One minute you're playing an upgraded *Dungeon Master*, next a cut-down *Shadow of the Beast* and then.... well, I don't know quite how to describe it, it's a sort of combination of the previous two sections I guess. Even stranger, this bizarre mixture actually works.

Wil Mason, a lecturer in medieval history, is travelling home through desolate storm-lashed Snowdonia when his car breaks down. Unable to fix the fault he takes shelter in a strange stone tower nestling in the nearby woods. Exhausted, he soon falls asleep.



Once inside the castle you get yet another change in view. You can move left and right, while pushing forwards and back takes you into and out of the scene, with your figure enlarging as it approaches the foreground.

Mason awakes to a surprise - his clothes have been transformed into those of a medieval peasant. Even worse, his car - and the road - have disappeared. Mason's troubles have only just begun...

Obitus is a fantasy adventure game with a more than a hint of arcade action. As Mason you have to find a way to get home from this strange and magical world.

You start the game in the woods surrounding the tower. The screen is split into two parts - the top is dominated by a *Dungeon Master*-like view of the woods in the direction you're facing with a status panel below.

All control is effected via a hand-like mouse pointer. By clicking on the compass you can rotate your view and travel down open pathways; the way the scenery scrolls past in impressively smooth 3D is truly stunning.

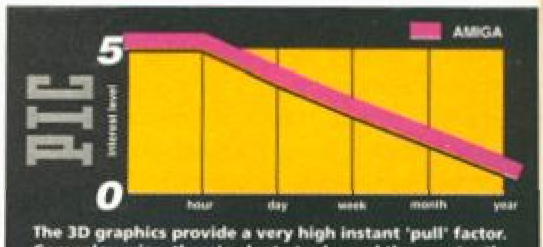
More complex interaction with the environment is possible using the small set of icons on the status panel, such as TALK, INFO and PICK. You can carry quite a few objects - the one currently held is illustrated in the window beside the compass and you can easily scroll through your inventory. Some icons act on the item in this window, i.e select EAT with an apple in the inventory window and your health will increase.

When you eventually get out of the woods the game changes to a side-viewed run along a path infested with people bent on your destruction. Using the joystick you can run left, right, jump and duck their attacks (although this seemed to have no effect on preventing them hitting you). Eventually you'll reach a new location to explore. The most frustrating thing about this section from an adventurer's point of view is that although you may see an interesting castle in the distant background, you can't actually turn off the path and visit it.

There's a third game style, which comes into play when you enter a castle. Each room is shown in perspective and as you move Mason around he shrinks and grows according to where he is. Control is by both joystick (to guide Mason around the rooms) and mouse (to click on icons and interact with scenery as in the 3D section).

Obitus may sound like it could be a real dog's dinner but it actually comes together surprisingly well. RPG purests would no doubt find it's cross-breeding of game styles annoying, and it has to be admitted that the game lacks the depth and atmosphere of a *Dungeon Master* or an *Ultima*. However, gamers looking for something a little different with more depth than the typical arcade adventure but more action than a 'standard' RPG should give *Obitus* a whirl - I think they'll like it.

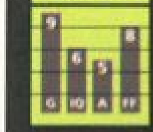
● **David Upchurch**



The 3D graphics provide a very high instant 'pull' factor. Gameplay-wise, there's plenty to do, and the constantly changing viewpoints help keep your interest. However, hard-core RPG fans may be put off by the lack of real interaction with the people you meet and the slightly frustrating arcade aspects.

ACE RATING

830

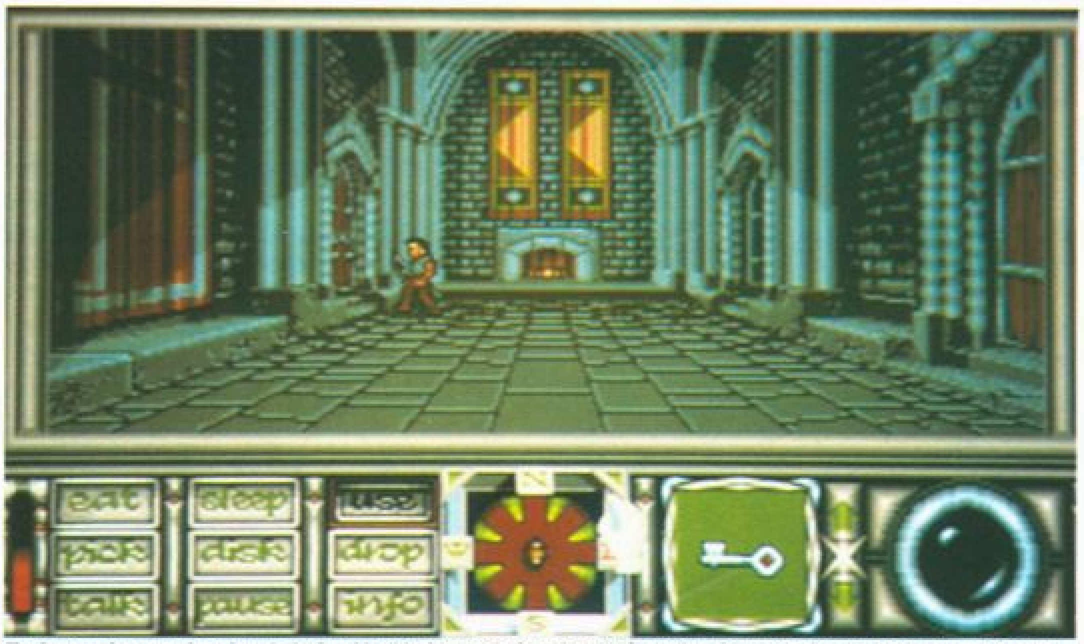


AMIGA

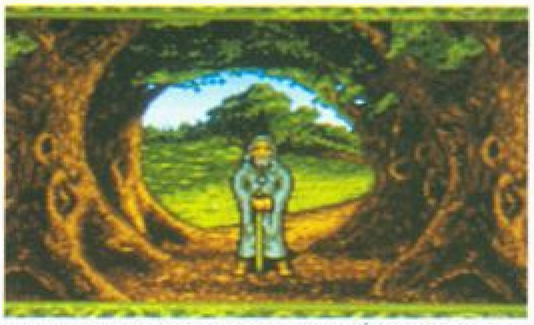
No complaints with the graphics - the 3D system is absolutely gorgeous to look at and easy to use (although it can require a bit of mouse precision at times). The other two game styles are fine, with some good parallax on the running section, but are a little disappointing in comparison. Sound is adequate but not special - a few grunts, groans and magical 'tinkling' noises are about all you get.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£34.99	OUT NOW



The journey between locations is depicted in sideview, with three layers of parallaxed horizontal-scrolling background scenery. Ne'er-do-wells occasionally poke their heads out from the bushes and attack you. No matter what you do it seems impossible to avoid taking some damage, although thankfully you start off with plenty of energy.



Can you trust this mysteriousgent 's help? With the icons in the bottom left you can pick up items, eat food or use the objects in your inventory box (open doors with keys, climb down hole with rope or, as here, attack with a knife), amongst other things.

DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

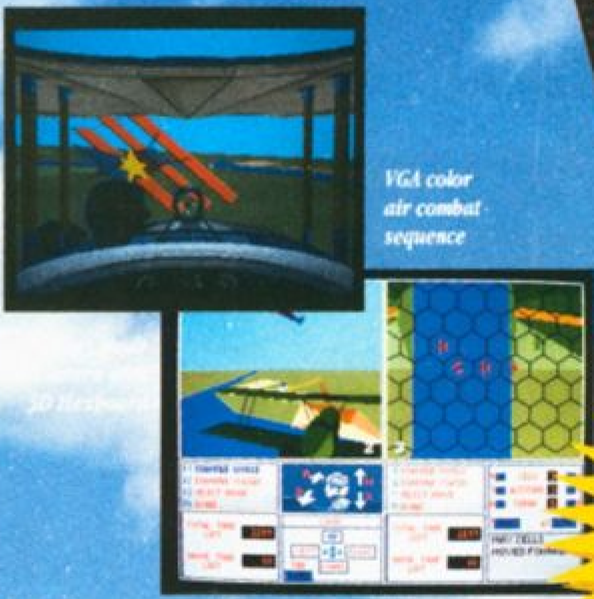
ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

WWI Air Combat Simulation

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Mannock, Rickenbacher—and learn their tricks and techniques.

- Action dogfight, solo, and team missions for one or two players using a single computer with any combination of keyboard, joystick, or mouse.
- Strategy Dogfight: For the skilled purist, Blue Max acts like a highly-intelligent strategic board game, allowing you and your opponent to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
- 8 airplanes to choose from, each with its own highly-detailed flying characteristics.
- Perform missions with, as, or against the Aces of the Great War.
- Dozens of historical missions around 4 different locations within France.

How strong are your nerves at 2,000 feet, with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory, friend. Think survival.



VGA color air combat sequence

3D Playback

BLUE MAX
ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

• VGA 256 3D COLOR GRAPHICS,
• ORIGINAL MUSIC,
SOUND EFFECTS FOR GAME BLASTER, ADLIB SYNTHESIZER CARDS

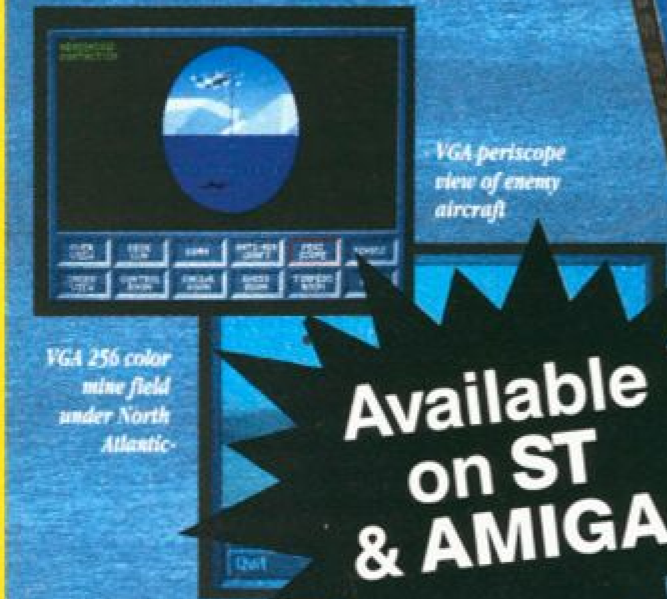
DAS BOOT

GERMAN U-BOAT SIMULATION

Winter, 1941. The icy waters of the North Atlantic. The deeper you dive, the greater the pressure. Depth charges explode around you, banging on the hull of your U-boat like iron fists. Nerve and cunning make you the terror of the Allied convoys.

- 3D submarine warfare: For the first time, a sub warfare game lets you deal with threats below *and* above the surface in a true three dimensional environment.
- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
- Many missions to choose from—into the North Atlantic and Arctic, inland along the coast of Norway, into the Bay of Biscay, and through the Straits of Gibralter.
- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal *and* external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....



VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft

VGA 256 color mine field under North Atlantic

Available on ST & AMIGA

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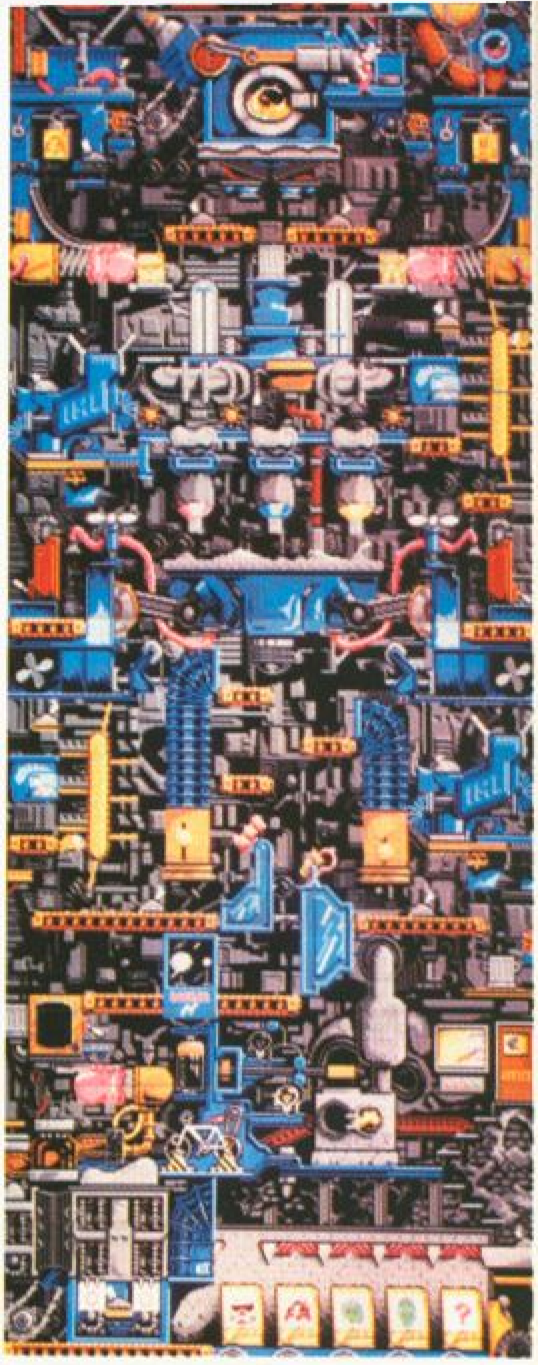


AMIGA - The BEAST in all its glory... nearly! Only one part of the monster machine remains mysteriously hidden behind smoked glass. Well, we couldn't want to spoil all your fun!

NIGHT SHIFT

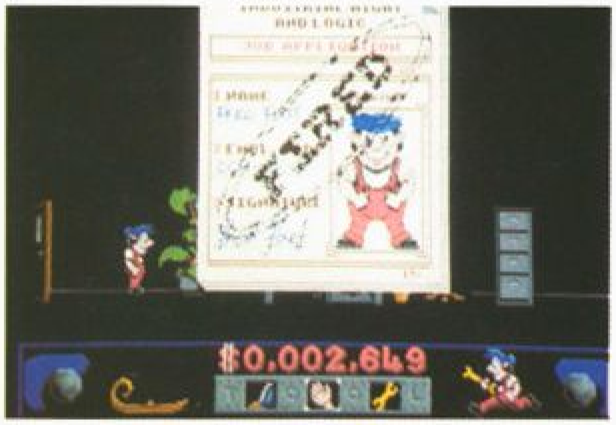
LUCASFILM/US GOLD get on the job

Glenn T. Bingham has been described as a crank in the Toy Trade press, but men of vision are often ridiculed. Bingham, the founder and president of Industrial Might and Logic, scoured rubbish dumps for raw scrap and built his great dream - the 'BEAST', or Bingham's Environmentally Active Solution for Toys; a machine that could produce toys to his exacting specifications without wasting his money or the Earth's resources!

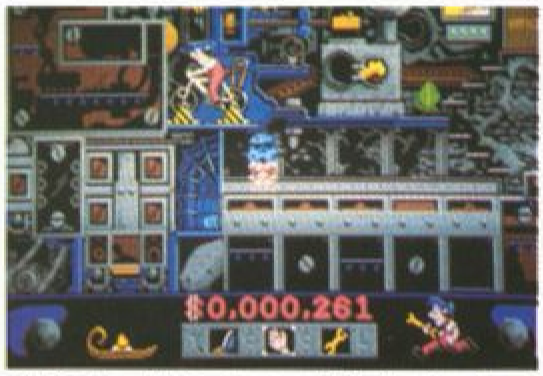
The BEAST began turning out high quality mini-dolls based on famous LucasFilm characters, such as Storm Trooper Toddler and Mini Threepio. But production was plagued by bugs - the BEAST was very idiosyncratic and needed constant maintenance. Then, furry lemmings started sneaking into the factory and hindering repairs.

IML managed to keep these troubles secret from their competitors. One problem, however, couldn't be covered up - the low output. Bingham decided to keep the BEAST running through the night to help increase production, and advertised for a suitable worker in the local paper...

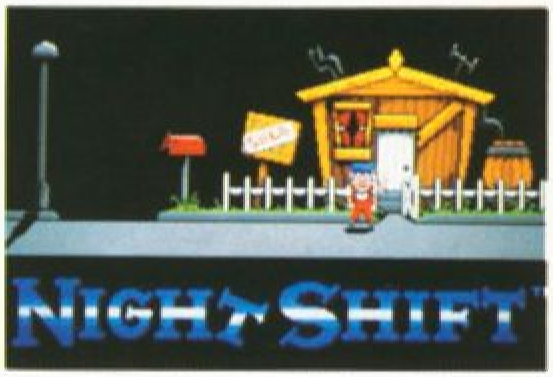
This is where you come in. Taking on the role of Fred or Fiona Fixit, you have to keep the BEAST running smoothly. Before each shift the Boss calls you into his office and shows you the night's production schedule. Fail to meet your toy quota and you get the sack. Succeed and you go onto the next shift, with any excess dolls resulting in a wage bonus.



AMIGA - Fail to meet your quota and it's back to the dole queue. Your dreams of riches beyond imagination are over.



AMIGA - On yer bike! Fred has to peddle (and you have to waggle the joystick left and right) furiously to generate enough power to get the BEAST started.



IBM PC - The home fo your dreams! Earn enough dosh from bashing out toys and you can buy that little place of your own you've always dreamed about.

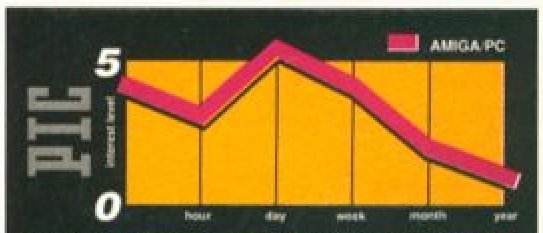
During the shift you have to leap around the BEAST (the screen scrolls vertically to keep up with you) fixing any glitches. Often this can be done straight away, such as pedalling the bike to generate power, moving levers to make the conveyor belts go in the right directions or changing the paint to the colour required for the current doll.

However, other situations will require you have a quick rummage around your tool box, which contains a variety of helpful widgets, such as wrenches for tightening bolts, matches for lighting the boiler, and (most bizarre!) hoovers and Venus flytraps for getting rid of marauding lemmings. Also available are umbrellas which let you drop long distances without knocking yourself out and balloons that give you a quick lift up the BEAST.

A quality controller checks every finished toy, and will discard any rejects. Once you've got the BEAST pumping out toys correctly you can begin to spend some time picking up the bonus tools that appear randomly about the BEAST, as well as hourglasses for extra shift time and dollar signs that up your wages.

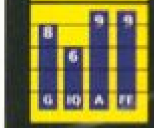
The early shifts only require that you make a few dolls of one type in any colour. Later shifts introduce more machinery that has to be maintained and different doll types, each of which have to be painted a specified colour. As you can guess, things can get very complex. Complete 30 shifts and fame and fortune are yours.

● David Upchurch



The packaging and presentation are highly polished, but the program takes an awful long time to stop faffing around with copy protection checking and disk accessing and let you get on with playing the game. Then there's a fairly long period of frustration as you find out the hard way what you can and can't jump on and fix. However, once you do you'll discover that a day at the factory has never been so much fun and will keep you nut tightening for a long time.

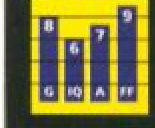
ACE RATING
835



AMIGA

Excellent presentation, with entertaining between-level animated scenes. Unfortunately this entails lots of lengthy disc accessing which can get very annoying, especially the long delay between games. Pity you can't turn these sequences off. The graphics are great, with smooth fast scrolling of the well-animated 'Beast' background. Special mention should go to the title screen tune - it's a clunky-clanky jingle full of metallic groans and grinding noises that suits the game perfectly but which you'll either love or hate.

ACE RATING
835



IBM PC

The game's near identical to the Amiga incarnation in EGA and VGA, and doesn't lose too much in CGA. And, for once, the IBM bleeper tune is surprisingly bearable. Gameplay is very satisfying and hugely enjoyable once the initially high learning curve is surmounted. The biggest grumble is the unacceptable amount of disk-swapping in-between games and levels. Hard drivers, of course, will have no such problems.

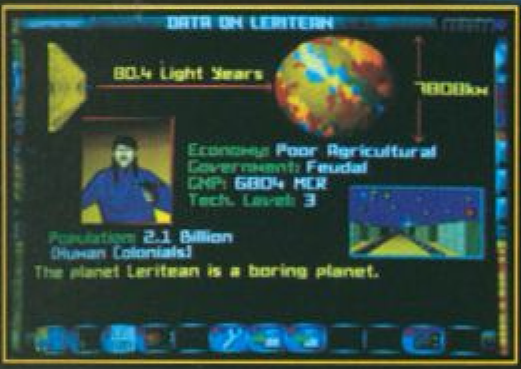
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£10.99cs/£15.99dk	OUT NOW
C64	£15.99dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£10.99cs	OUT NOW

ELITE
Plus
RAINBIRD

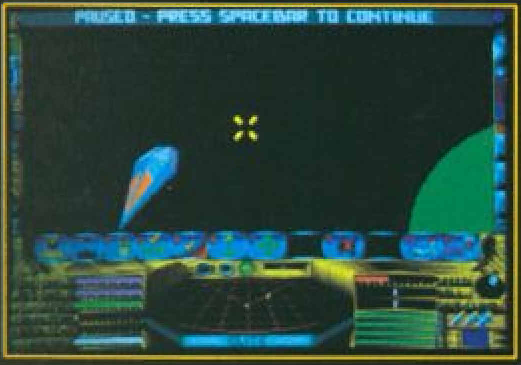
Good, Great, Best, Better

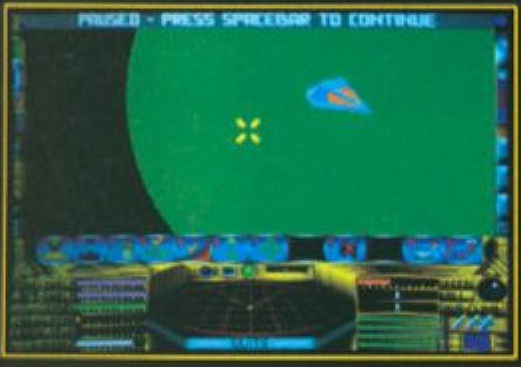
élite, *n. The choice part, the best, (0f). [F,= choice]*
plus, *adj. Additional, extra; positive. [L,= more]*


DATA ON LERITEAN

80.4 Light Years

Economy: Poor Agricultural
Government: Feudal
GNP: 6804 MCR
Tech. Level: 3
Population: 2.1 Billion
(Human Colonials)
The planet Leritean is a boring planet.





Good games come and go, and great ones last much longer. The best can win awards, but only one can claim to be Elite.

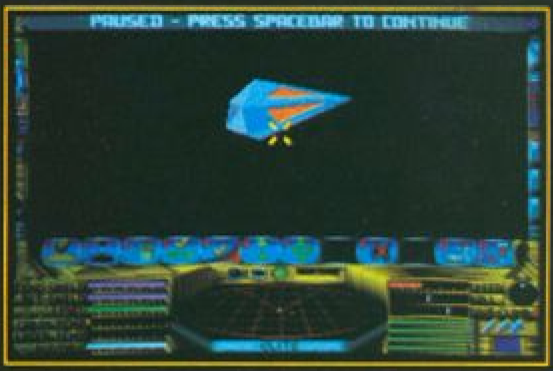
When the history of computer gaming is written, its name appears early on. And on. And on. Generations have played it; some have beaten it; but none have tired of it.

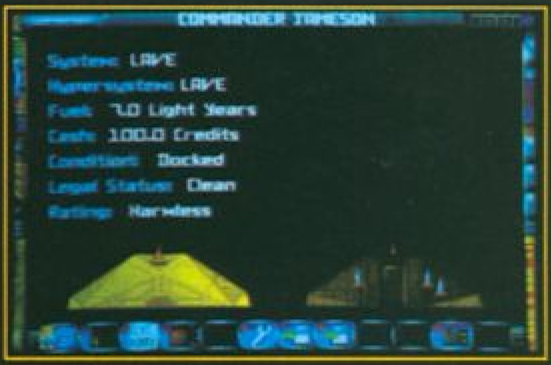
The original mix of space exploration, trading, and combat has endured imitators, pretenders and millions of hours of play. Now the best is to get better.

Rainbird have updated the IBM PC compatibles version to utilise the technology which has developed over the game's lifetime.

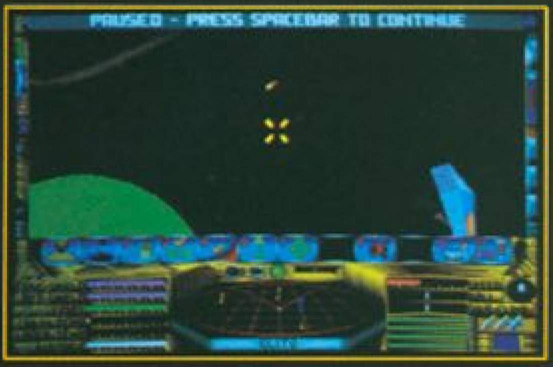
Amazing 3-D graphics, in EGA, VGA and MCGA modes bring even more life to cosmic combat; a redesigned icon-driven interface speeds trading, information gathering and map reading; support of Ad-Lib and Roland sound-boards enable your ears to share the vivid pleasures of life on the high seas of space; and brand new missions extend gameplay even further than before.

The classic six-year old recipe remains the same; new ingredients add to the flavour; treat your taste-buds to *the* best. Elite Plus.



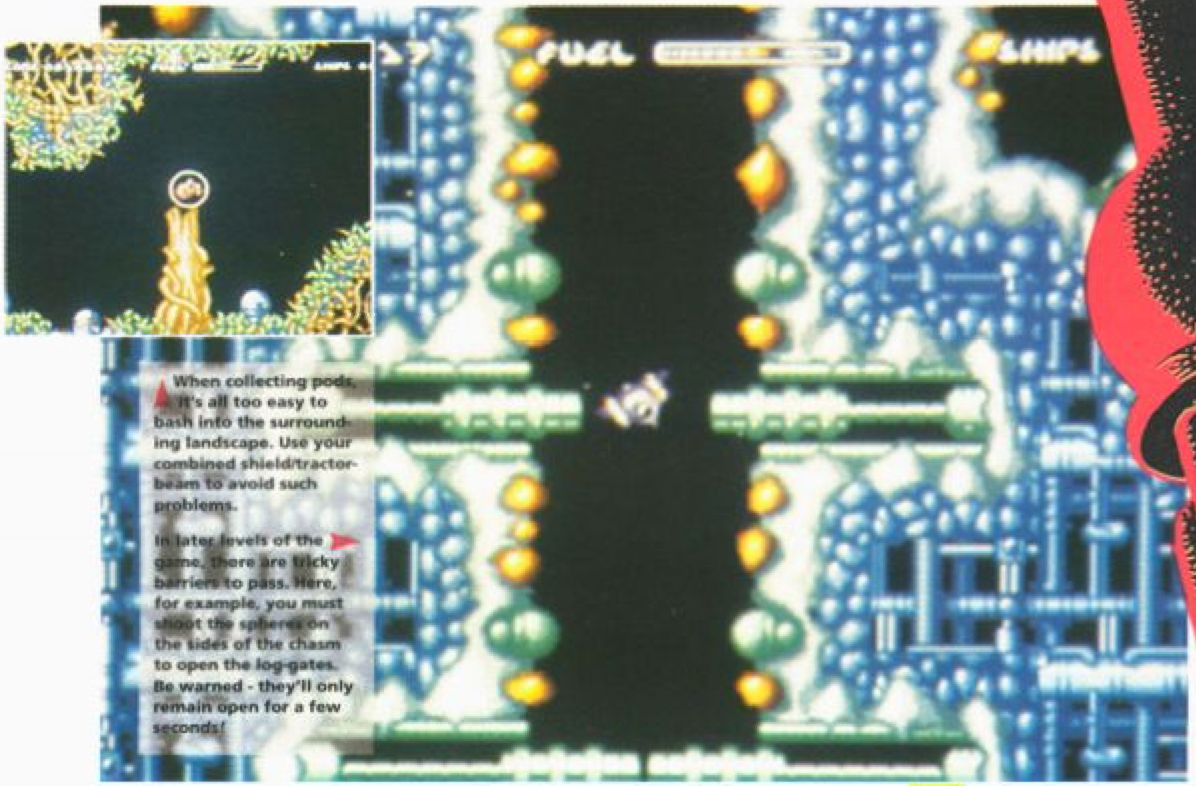

COMMANDER JAMESON

System: LAVE
Hypersystem: LAVE
Fuel: 7.0 Light Years
Cash: 100.0 Credits
Condition: Docked
Legal Status: Clean
Rating: Harmless

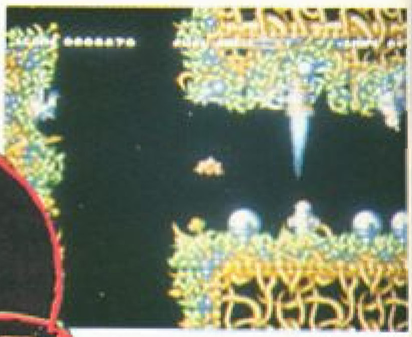


Elite Plus will be available for IBM PC compatibles at £34.99.
The original versions of Elite are available for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, at £24.99.

Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. Tel: 0666 504326


When collecting pods, it's all too easy to bash into the surrounding landscape. Use your combined shield/tractor-beam to avoid such problems.

In later levels of the game, there are tricky barriers to pass. Here, for example, you must shoot the spheres on the sides of the chasm to open the log-gates. Be warned - they'll only remain open for a few seconds!


Thermic venting units can frazzle your ship. Careful timing and a balance of fuel reserves are necessary if you're to avoid them.

Zarathrusta

HEWSON's latest is a simple affair; an attempt to reach back to those bygone days where gameplay was everything

It takes a reasonable amount of nerve to launch a 16-bit game based on *Thrust*, an 8-bit budget game from two years ago which - in turn - was a cross between *Asteroids* and *Lunar Lander*. Despite the enhanced graphics, *Zarathrusta* doesn't really denote much of a step forward.

You are the pilot of a tiny spacecraft, charged with the mission of locating and collecting Klystron pods from the surface of increasingly heavily-defended planets. Using your limited supply of fuel, you must battle your way through the defences and negotiate deadly underground caverns in order to collect the pods before returning to your mothership and travelling further into space, to pillage more remote worlds.

There are 10000 bonus points to be earned by shooting out the planet's nuclear reactor, thus permanently shutting down any alien activity and making the planet unstable. Then it's a race against time to collect the Klystron pods and escape before the planet collapses. Actually, there's little chance of running out of time, as your fuel reserves are likely to dry out first.

If you've played such inertia-driven games as *Asteroids*, *Thrust* or *Oids*, you'll know what to expect from your ship control; clockwise and anti-clockwise rotation, thrust and fire. There's also a tractor-beam/shield, which can be used to attract the Klystron pods and protect your ship from collision with the surrounding scenery. Unprotected encounters with the planet's surface will destroy your ship.

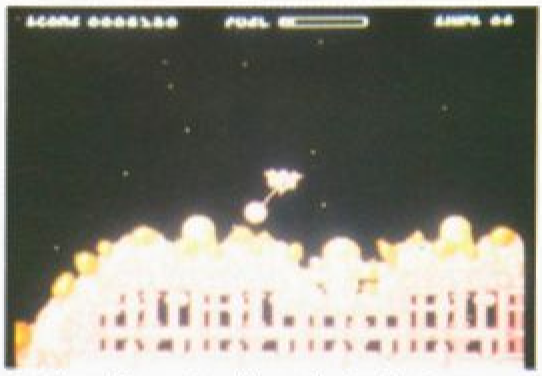
The further into the game you progress, the smoother the flying necessary in order to survive. Certain planets have stronger gravitational pull than others; and others have heavy defence systems.

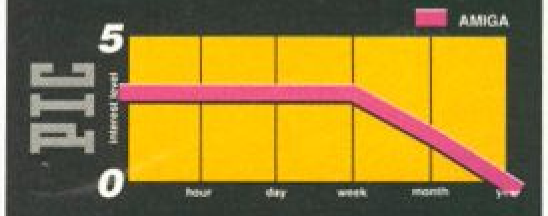
With the game premise being so simple, the control the player has over the ship is vital. Here *Zarathrusta* succeeds pretty well. The difficulty of the early levels is pitched quite low, allowing the player enough time to get to grips with the control method, rather than being blasted out of the air every five seconds.

The landscapes of the planets vary from over-vegatated jungle areas, through mechanised zones, to icy wastes. Fuel in certain regions is extremely scarce, and rather than spending time blasting away at the reactor, it's best to simply collect the pods and run.

If you already possess *Oids*, *Thruster* or a similar game, it's unlikely *Zarathrusta* will hold many surprises. If you were a fan of similarly controlled arcade machines, you may find it fun.

● **Jim Douglas**

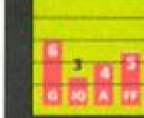

Shooting out the reactor will cause the planet to become unstable. There's 10000 extra points to be be earned from this grandiose vandalism.



Certainly not the most enthralling game, and pretty superficial actually. But *Zarathrusta* is the sort of game that you can keep coming back to - in small doses - for quite a while. Once you've got to grips with the ship control, and learnt how to negotiate the passages, it's good fun. Don't expect it to keep you at your keyboard forever, though.

ACE RATING

700



AMIGA

Nice sound, and on first impressions, equally high-quality graphics but there seems to have been some slightly ugly space-saving routines for the planet backgrounds. Large areas of tree-roots, rocks or machinery are filled with blocks, but the block design is a bit iffy and you can see the joins. Apart from this, there's nothing to fault *Zarathrusta* on the technical front.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

SPORTS 4D

BOXING

"4D Sports Boxing is absolutely brilliant...the boxers move pretty much like their real-life counterparts ...Here goes. Ooooooof! (Crunch)."
ZERO HERO 90%

"...This is the best game I have ever played..."
-Don Mattrick, President of Distinctive Software Inc

"Seconds out...Round One! The crowd leap to their feet as the fighters rain down on each other...was that a stumble? YES He's down...what a knock out. This is boxing at it's absolute best. What a brilliant fight"

"4D Sports Boxing is simply one of the best sports simulations around...Superb." The One 90%

DSI

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Mindscape and award winning developers DSI bring a new era of games to your home computer with the 4D Sports series. Here the 4th Dimension is realism and the action is amazingly real. Modelled and simulated on real human movement, 4D Sports Boxing is the most accurate sports simulation ever written. 4D Sports Boxing lets you create and save a camp of up to ten of your own boxers. You dictate how tall, how heavy and how strong they are. Next you train them and build them up into lean, powerful fighting machines - then it's time to enter them into their first fight.

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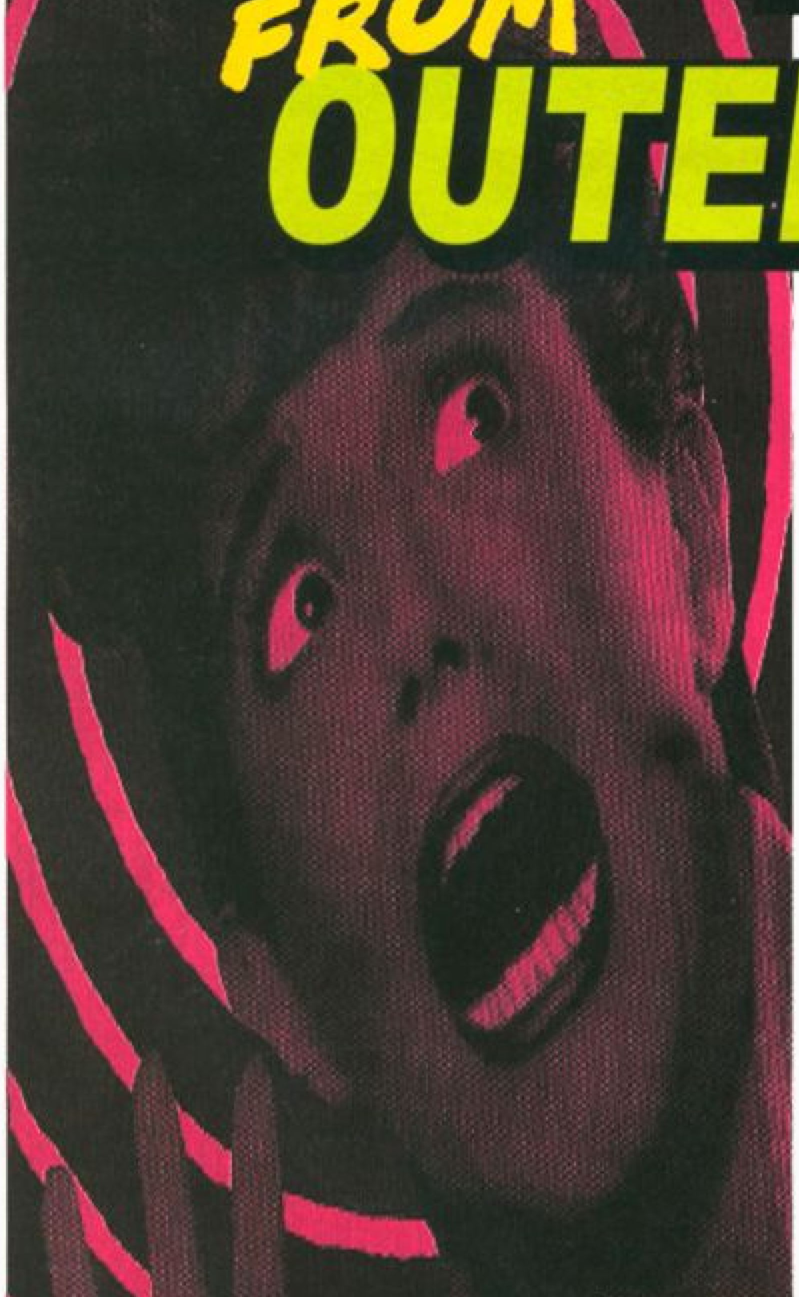
WINDSURFING ZOMBIES FROM OUTER SPACE

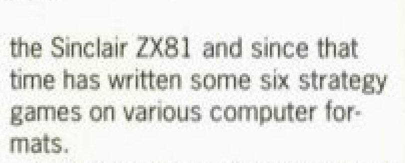


Is Activision producing a B-movie? Rik Haynes previews four new games from the veteran American software house...

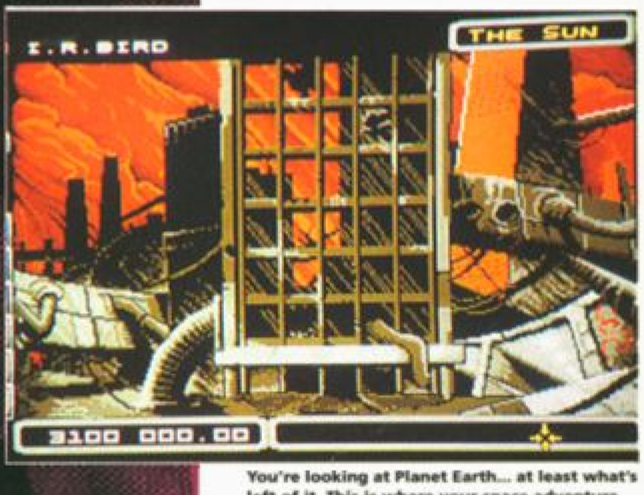
DEUTEROS

What would you get if you expanded the strategy sections of *Elite* while erasing its arcade sequences? That's what Activision seems to have done with this sequel to *Millennium 2.2*, the successful science-fiction strategy game. The appropriately titled *Deuteros*, the Greek word for second, is an atmospheric follow-up to the surprise hit of 1989. At its core, *Deuteros* is a resource management game. Once you've got the orbital factories, spaceships and universal exploration nicely under way, the game expands into a dynamic adventure involving mysterious alien artifacts and deadly encounters with their creators.

Ian Bird, a 31 year-old programmer from Coventry, has created both *Millennium 2.2* and *Deuteros*, but he's no newcomer to strategy games. Bird produced the first strategic submarine simulation for the Sinclair ZX81 and since that time has written some six strategy games on various computer formats.



Now you're ready to go where no person has gone before, but can this engine take it, captain?



You're looking at Planet Earth... at least what's left of it. This is where your space adventure begins.

Similar in style to *Millennium 2.2*, but nearly ten times bigger, *Deuteros* provides a far greater challenge for your dedicated space strategist. It is set one thousand years on from where the original ended. The legendary *Millennium 2.2* galactic empire is waiting to be reclaimed, though a space-fleet has to be built from scratch before you can go forth and conquer. Space technology has been forgotten, so it's up to you to instigate research, production and training programmes for this epic project. Then the fun really begins...

Jai Redman is again providing the visuals, only this time the graphics have a bio-tech feel and more animation.

Activision is very proud of *Deuteros*, and quite rightly too, for the game has far greater potential than its illustrious predecessor. It has, in other words, the hallmarks of being a classic game. *Deuteros* is launched next month on the Amiga and ST. Let's hope it does the business.

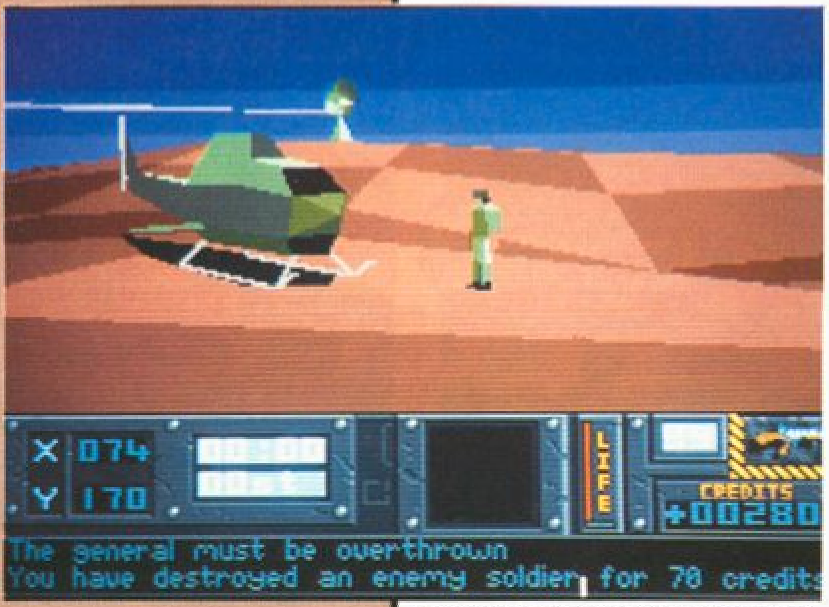
HUNTER

He's tough, he can fly a helicopter or drive a tank, he's on a deadly sabotage mission behind enemy lines, he's totally 3D, he's *Hunter*.

Paul Holmes, an ex-CRL programmer, has written a game which uses some of the most innovative three-dimensional routines yet seen - thus creating a novel new style of arcade action game. *Hunter* is like a James Bond movie or Milk Tray advert displayed in glorious 3D running at a max of 25 frames per second.

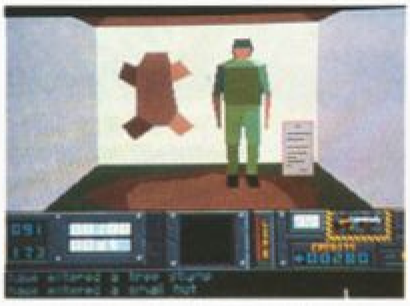
Your on-screen character can go anywhere and do anything. Enter buildings and manipulate anything in sight. You see a helicopter laying idle. No problem. Just walk up to it and you're away, flying in the skies. The same goes for more mundane vehicles like bicycles and jeeps. You can even do a spot of windsurfing but there's no time to relax; the enemy is waiting for you and your fuel supply is fast running out. After all, who wants to walk into battle when you could smash through enemy lines in a main battle tank.

Hunter can be played as a giant campaign game or split into smaller missions. The large game-map is randomly generated every time you play to help maintain long-term interest. So move over action man because *Hunter* is soon to be released on Amiga and ST. A new age of 3D combat adventuring is about to begin.

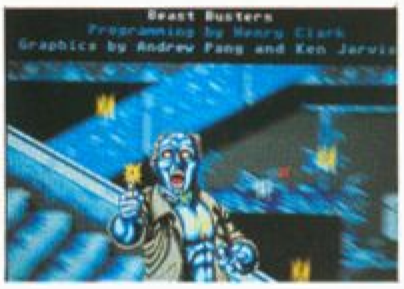


The general must be overthrown
You have destroyed an enemy soldier for 70 credits

Hunter. The helicopter is one of the best vehicles to control in the game, though ACE has a soft-spot for the bicycle.



Hunter. And all because the lady loves Milk Tray... Hunter can go anywhere in this game.


Beast Busters
Programming by Henry Clark
Graphics by Andrew Pang and Ken Jarvis

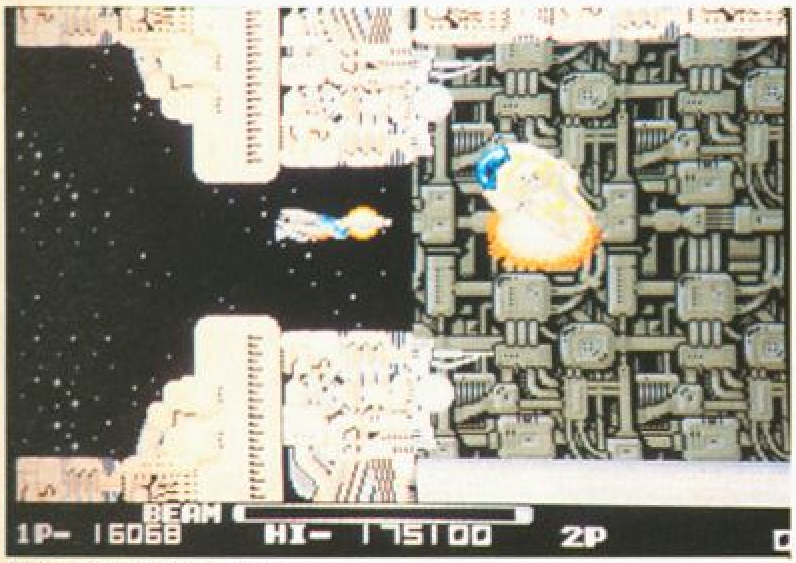
BEAST BUSTERS

Out of the mist, a horde of flesh-eating zombies rise up and come after you. Is it a nightmare or the latest cult horror movie from George *'Night of the Living Dead'* Romero? No, it's a conversion of SNK's horrifying *Beast Busters* arcade game.

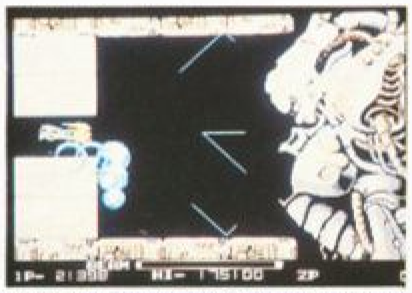
Another in the *Operation Wolf* style of mindless machine-gun shoot'em-ups, *Beast Busters* is a seven-stage search and destroy mission to end this zombie uprising. The game is a simple blood 'n' guts blaster with plenty of zombies, mad dogs and innocent bystanders to blow away. *Beast Busters* has the multi-directional scrolling sections and head-on down-the-corridor action as seen in *Operation Thunderbolt*. Your finger hardly ever leaves the fire-button during play, it's all down to 'don't think, just shoot'.

Images is in charge of the conversions to Amiga and ST, which should be available before Easter. This games developer has previously converted *Ninja Spirit* and *Super Wonderboy* for Activision.

Beast Busters is the best game from SNK since *Ikari Warriors* so the computer conversions should be worth a look. Hopefully, the game will also be transferred to SNK's games-starved Neo-Geo console system, which is in desperate need of greater software support.



R-Type II. Time to unleash The Force!



R-Type II. This end-of-level guardian has gained a suit of armour since the first game.

R-TYPE II

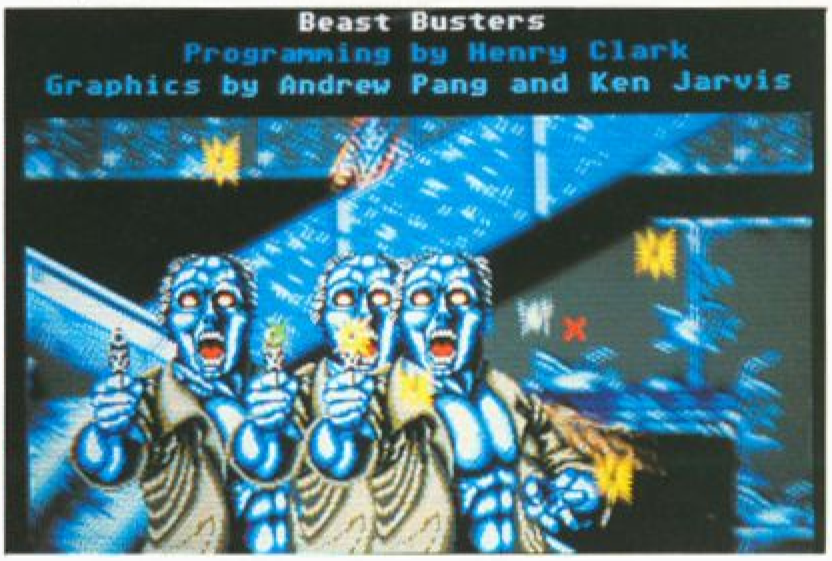
The evil Bydo empire is back and determined to subjugate the world (again). A desperate battle is about to be fought out in the limitless and unknown dimensions of space which have been contaminated and corrupted by this evil power. It's payback time. You're sent into eight different sectors of space in the sophisticated R-9 fighter. You're personkind's only defence against the enemy. You're all alone.

Arc Developments is handling the conversion of this Irem coin-op, a scrolling shoot'em-up filled with boss sprites, reflection lasers and shield orbs. Weapons are increased or modified by shooting certain alien craft and collecting the jewels they leave behind. The first jewel collected also releases a special weapon, The Force, which can be attached to the front or rear of your R-9 fighter, sent ahead to clear a path, or behind as a rear-guard. The Force is equipped with its own lasers to take care of itself.

R-Type II is very much 'more of the same'. It has similar aliens and backdrops complemented by greater challenges and obstacles. Although

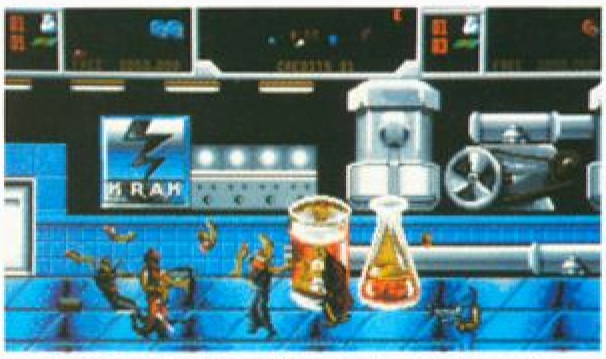
the game will be finished within the next few months, Activision is holding back its release till September.

▼ **Beast Busters.** Why does this remind me of Stock, Aitken and Waterman?

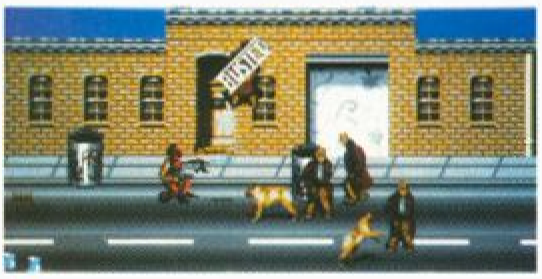

Beast Busters
Programming by Henry Clark
Graphics by Andrew Pang and Ken Jarvis

NARC

Join OCEAN's drugbusters and US GOLD's anti-terrorist squad in the never-ending fight against organised crime!



You're busted! The pacifists amongst you will be pleased to read that you don't have to kill everyone. Stand next to a baddy for a couple of seconds and you can arrest him for a big bonus.



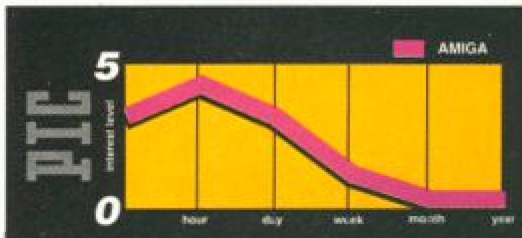
Boomshanka! Legs and arms go flying as you launch a bazooka shell into the crowd of criminals hassling your partner. Dr Frankenstein would have a field day!

Now here's a novelty: a scrolling shoot-'em-up with a strong anti-drugs message - although that does tend to get lost amidst the explosions and flying body parts. Not so much "Just say No" but "Just say Aaaiiieeeee!!!".

You play yet another in the long line of over-muscled hunks with a mission - this time to infiltrate Mr Big's hide-out and put a satisfyingly violent end to his drug-peddling activities. If you want you can invite a similarly well-built mate along for some extra pusher-pasting power.

The game is split into twelve horizontally-scrolling levels viewed from a raised angle so that you get a pseudo-3D view of the action. In keeping with game convention you have to battle your way from one end to t'other. You can move around freely using the joystick. Tapping up makes you jump while tapping down makes you crouch.

Each level is infested with a variety of scum just begging to be blasted with your machine gun or splattered to the four winds with your bazooka (accessed by holding down the fire



Not a stunning product, and the relatively easy method of making progress means this is unlikely to be a game you'll be returning to in a month let alone a year.

ACE RATING

720

G	IQ	A	FF
6	2	6	5

AMIGA

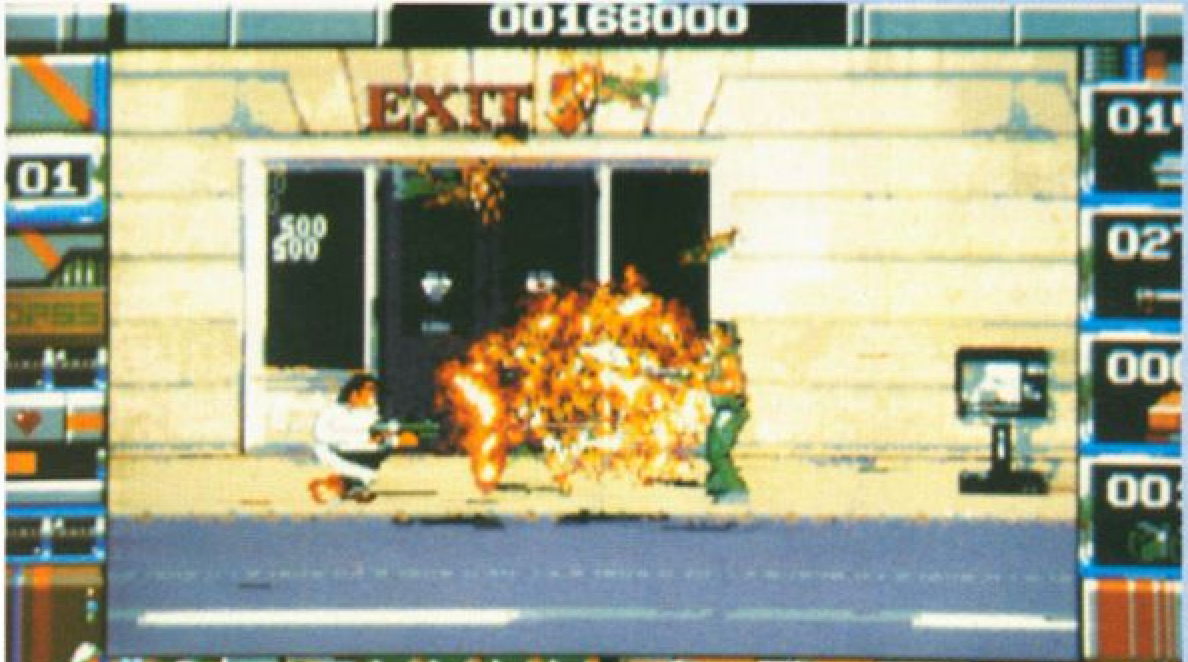
Overall, disappointing. The scrolling is smooth-ish and there are a pretty large number of baddies on screen at one time, but this looks suspiciously like an ST port. The graphic design is poor, with badly animated sprites hobbling around dull backdrops. Sound is adequate with a tedious sample-packed tune between games stopping the action. Even the normally sure fire hit of a two-player option doesn't really do much to improve the fun. If you're a big fan of the coin-op you may enjoy this, otherwise think carefully before buying.

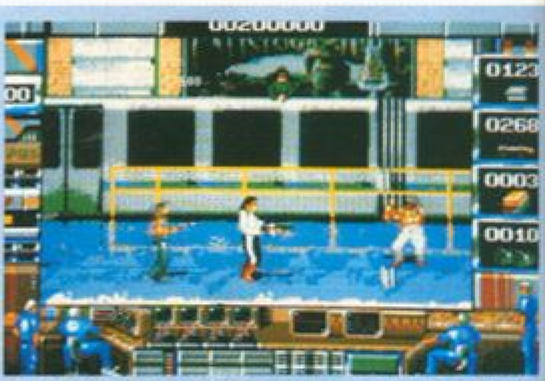
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£ 10.99cs/£ 15 99dk	OUT NOW
C 64	£ 10.99cs/£ 15 99dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£ 10.99cs/£ 15 99dk	OU T NOW

No other versions planned

Crash! Bang! Wallop! Wot a picture! Take that, you kidnapping slime! Look out for the TVs (on the far right of the screen). Shooting them reveals hidden energy restorer- who said TV was bad for you?

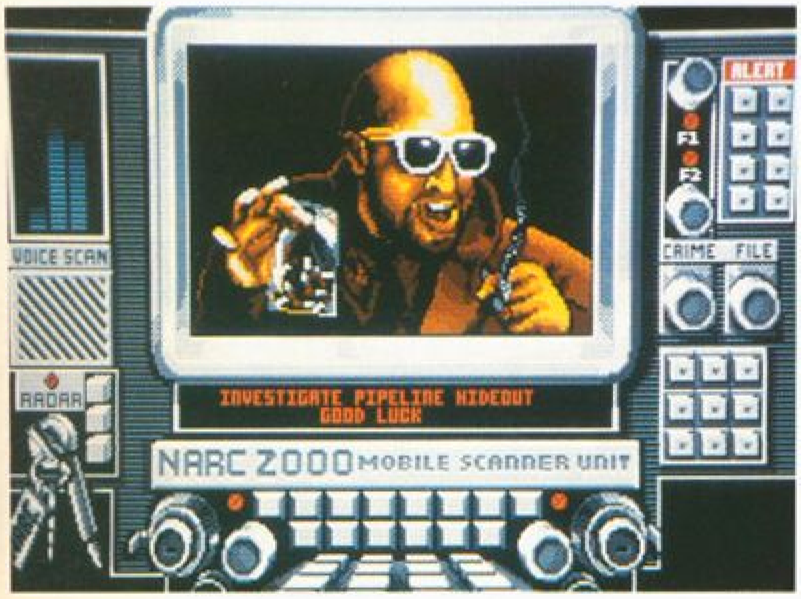




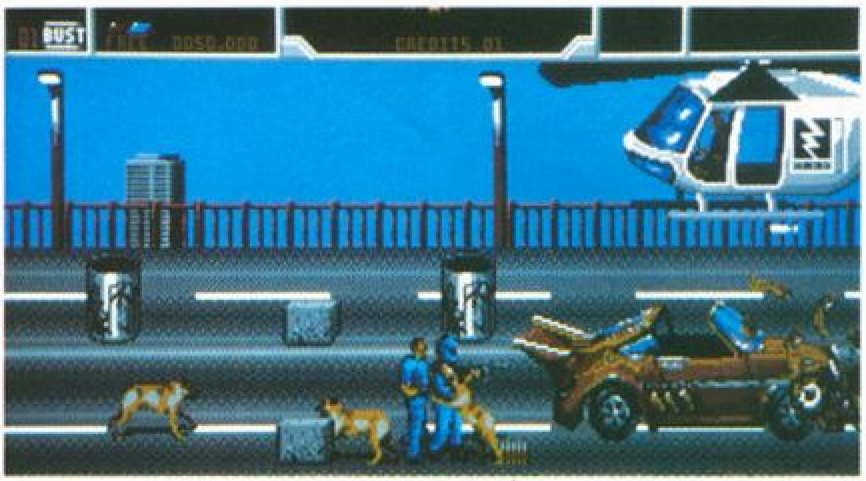
In the subway, and the first appearance of the karate killers.

Yet more justice from the barrel of the gun! Have these people never heard of trial by jury? The King Pin, head of the MOB, has kidnapped President Cole's beautiful daughter, Brittany. Lucas McCabe, hardman extraordinaire, decides it's about time the King Pin was nailed - for good! Armed with a machine gun and a grenade-launching add-on he sets out through ** levels of horizontal-scrolling action. (Oooh, why do I get this terrible feeling of *deja vu*?)

Okay, let's not beat about the bush - this is a *NARC* clone. Like its inspiration there are hordes of baddies to blast, extra ammo and bonuses to pick up, and justice to be meted out on your way to rescuing the Prez's daughter. No arresting the criminals here - McCabe reckons taking prisoners is for fairies. McCabe also operates alone, so there's no two-player option.



Know your enemy! Before a level that introduces a new enemy type there's a screen giving you the low-down.

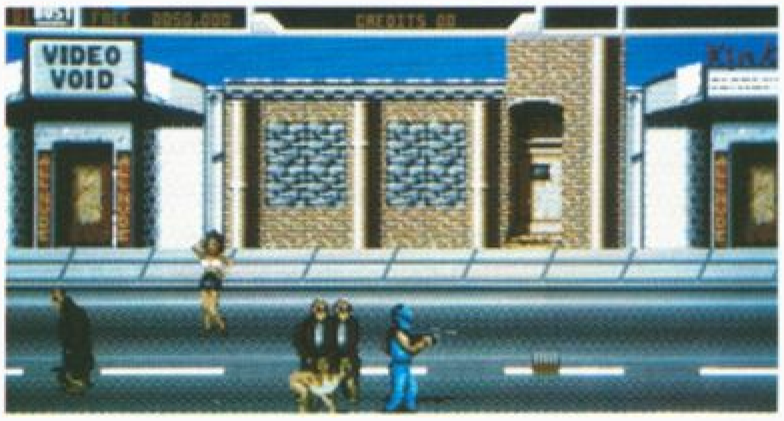


Another good reason to keep off the roads... the missiles spewed from Mr Big's chopper! Keep a track of its position using the Defender-like scanner at the top of the screen.

bazooka (accessed by holding down the fire button). But shoot carefully! Both bullets and bazooka shells are limited and running out is a deadly mistake. Luckily the downed druggies sometimes leave behind spare clips or shells, or wads of money and bags of drugs which can be collected for a meaty bonus awarded between levels. So far, so good.

However, there are niggles that detract seriously from the fun. For a start, you have to sit through the sampled tune between each game which is a pet hate of mine. More worrying are the gameplay faults. It's quite easy to get a long way into the game by simply running for the end of the level rather than standing and fighting - I got to level seven on my third try - which casts doubts on the game posing a serious challenge for more than a week.

The annoying control method means that sometimes you'll be jumping or crouching when you intended to move up or down the screen. However, the worst problem is that you automatically stand up from crouching when attacked. This is OK unless you're being attacked by dogs, which can only be shot when crouching. Of course, this becomes impossible because their attacks force you into a standing position. The only solution is to avoid them until they clear off. Very frustrating.



Hey-elp! Hey-elp! Save the kidnapped girl from the villain's clutches!

Overall, Ocean have done an reasonable job on this Williams' coin-op conversion. The action is quite fast and frenetic, and blasting baddies is reasonable fun (especially with a bazooka!). It's just a shame that some of the stupid gameplay wrinkles were not ironed out at the fine tuning stage.

● David Upchurch

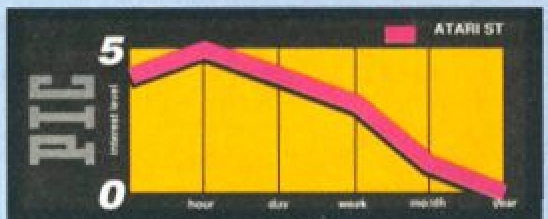
CRIME WAVE

In *Crime Wave*'s favour there are extra weapons to pick up in the later levels, and the explosions are bigger and bloodier. (Now there's mature criticism for you!) Fortunately, the game largely avoids *NARC*'s annoying gameplay niggles, although the control method, which is near identical to *NARC*, is just as fiddly until you get the hang of it.

Special mention should go to the presentation. The plot progress before and during the game is portrayed using a series of (occasionally animated) digitised images. It's not only very well done and impressive, it's also highly dubious - there seem to be an excessive number of shots of the scantily clad Brittany bound in a chair being leered over by her captors.

I found *Crime Wave* far more fun to play than *NARC*, mainly because the controls are less fussy and let you get on with the blasting. It's also a tougher game, so even hardened killers should be blowing away the bad guys for quite some time.

● David Upchurch



A long and hard challenge lies ahead for those who want to try and rescue Brittany, but some may find the action getting a little dull long before the final confrontation with the King Pin.

ACE RATING
745

G	IQ	A	FF
8	2	7	7

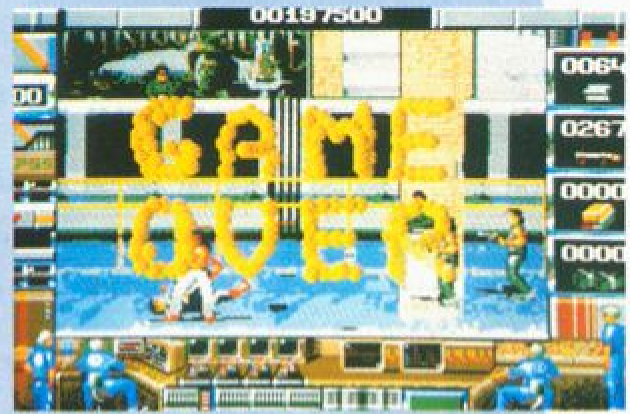
ATARI ST

The scrolling is quite smooth and fast for the ST, although it understandably slows seriously when there's a lot of on-screen havoc (not that you really notice in the heat of battle). The sound too is fine. The action may get a little repetitive in the long run, but otherwise it's a competent blast that neatly overshadows the Amiga version of *NARC*.

RELEASE DETAILS

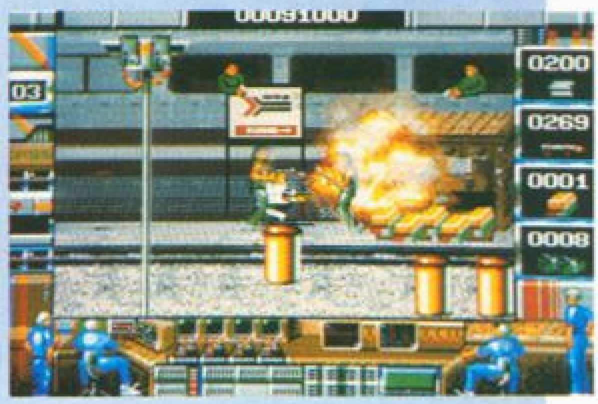
ATARI ST	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£ 24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned



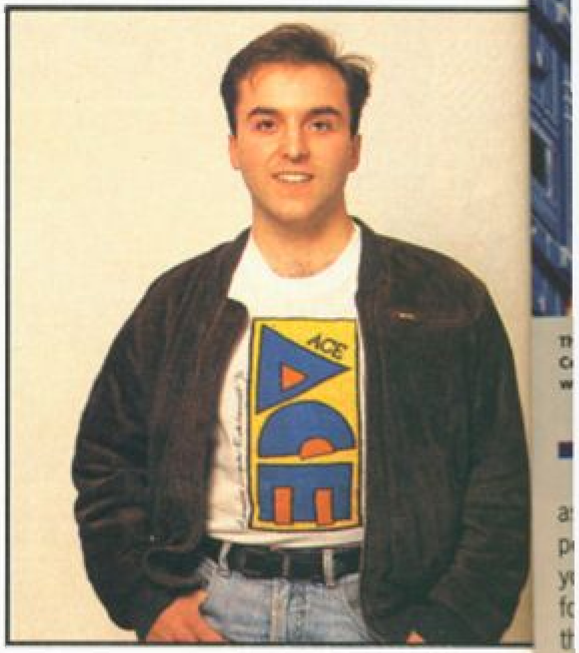
Those karate killers certainly live up to their name. It's back to the start for you!

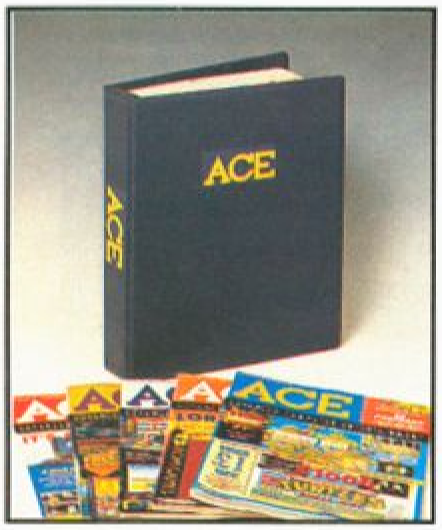
Shack attack! Blasting open the wooden hut reveals oodles of goodies to be collected.



ACE MERCHANDISE OFFER

There can surely be nothing more sexy and fashionable than the ACE t-shirt. This latest item in the *Ace Clothing Collection* is what every self respecting computing genius will be wearing this season. The eye catching ensemble has been exclusively designed by ACE's own art editor, Jim "Gaultier" Willis, for the lover of fine things and the reader with good taste. The t-shirt is available in sizes small, medium and extra large and can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of £5.99





▲ **ACE Binder A**

There is no better way of storing your copies of this, the world's finest computer entertainment magazine, than in an ACE binder. The binders are available in two designs - so as to satisfy even the most stalwart supporter of style and quality - and can be yours for the embarrassingly inexpensive price of £5.99

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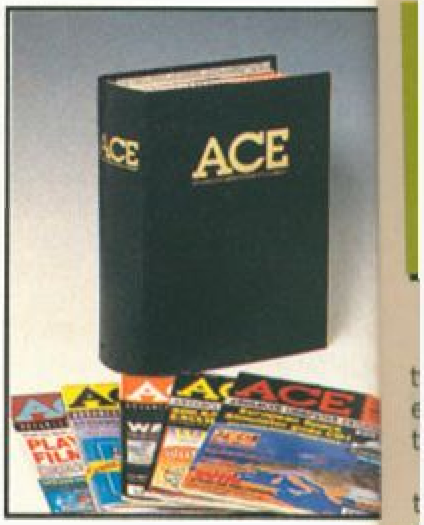

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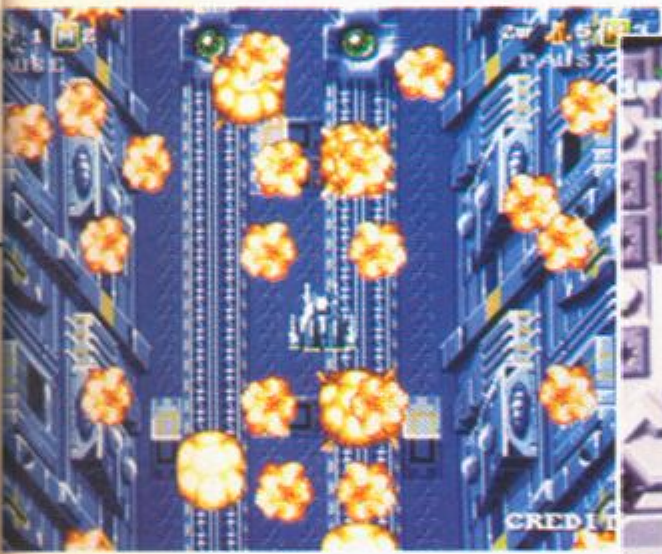
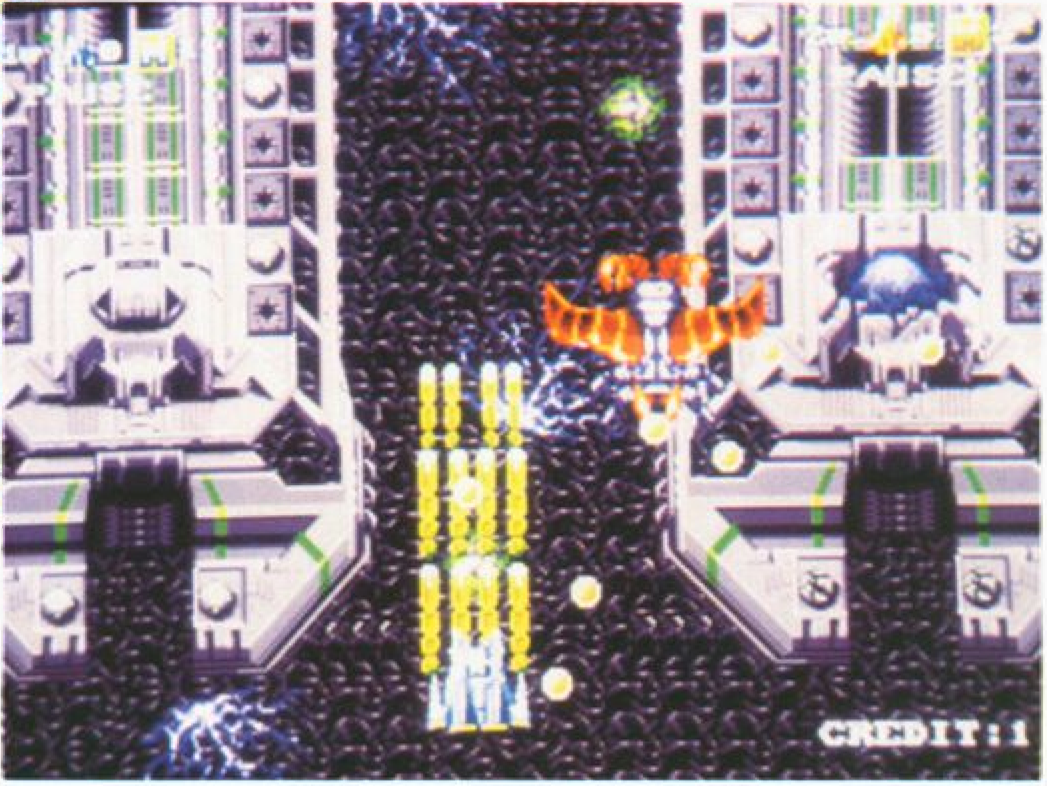


The quattro-beam laser in action. Probably the best weapon. Collecting a further power-up will spread the laser-fire over a wider area.



The smart bomb will clear virtually everything on the screen. Be careful, though, because some aliens can even withstand a direct blast.

Throughout the history of gaming, the two-player team-up option has almost become as strong an emotive pull as super weapon power-ups. The ability to pit both your own and your mates' blasting skills against the massed forces of an enemy empire is always more fun than having to wage a one-man war.

BATTLE SQUADRON

ELECTRONIC ARTS, better known for their strategy and simulation games, have leapt headfirst into the action arena. How have they fared?

In *Battle Squadron*, your mission is to rescue two heroes from behind enemy lines, before the evil torturers start extracting secrets with fiendish truth serums and mind probes.

But before any rescuing can be attempted, there's a whole lot of killing to be done. You must raid the planet Terrania, laying waste to its military installations and decimating the airborne forces of the evil empire.

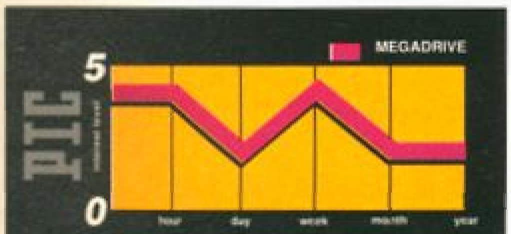
In traditional style, the planet's surface scrolls down from the top of the screen, bringing with it ever-more high-powered ground defences. For the first few seconds, you'll need to perform some nifty flying to avoid the initial enemy assault. Once you're a couple of screens into the game though, a rapid-firing enemy craft will emerge. Blast this bullet-spewing character and he will leave behind a power-up. Depending on the colour of the floating rectangle when you collect it, your weapons system will change from rockets, through front and back lasers and side-shooters to deadly green laser beams.

You can also collect extra smart-bombs which (when activated) fill the screen with a swirling mass of popcorn-shaped energy bolts, thus destroying everything. Unlike some games where smart bombs are easy to come by, *Battle Squadron* makes you really fight for them.

After completing a stage of over-ground action, you are sent downstairs for some subterranean blasting. Some of the underground sections feature massive lumps of space-coral which drift down the screen obscuring your view of the action. There seems to be no reason for the inclusion of these objects except to make life difficult. Since you would be able to see where you were going if you were actually in control of the spaceship, it seems a bit unfair to be prevented from seeing what you're fighting.

In conclusion: nice and simple, plenty of action and an excellent two-player team-up option.

● Jim Douglas



ACE RATING
790

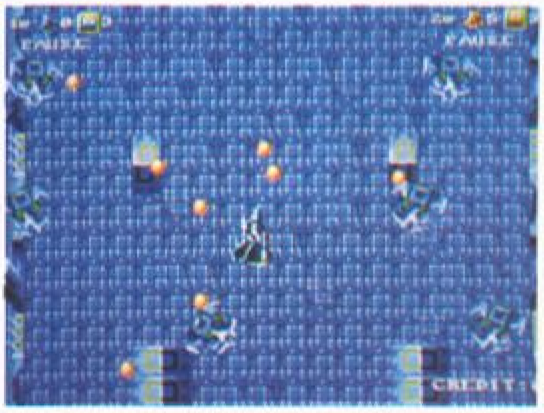
MEGADRIVE

Certainly not the most original game in the world, but an extremely good example of the type. If you've got a mate to play with, you'll enjoy it more, since the action can become a bit overwhelming for a lone warrior.

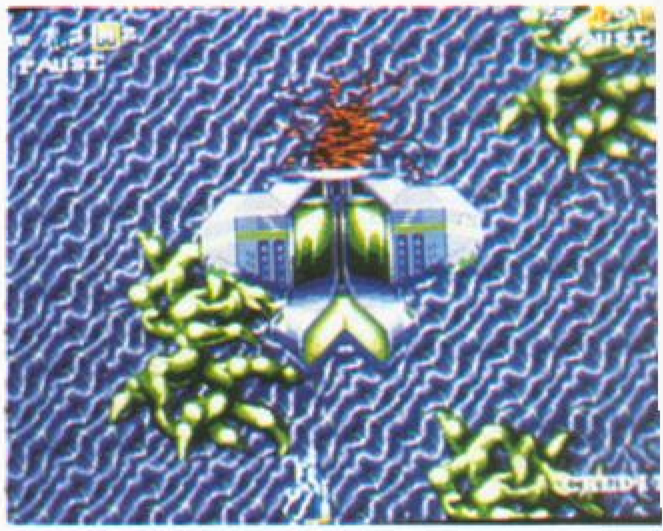
RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE £24.99 OUT NOW

No other versions planned



A brief moment of respite from the onslaught of enemy raiders. It may not look especially peaceful, but it's about as quiet as it ever gets.



The end-of-level guardians [illegible] they fire homing rockets which track you, and they take a lot of hits before conking out.

SUPER MARIOLAND

(Super Mario Bros IV)

Mario comes bouncing back in the fourth instalment of NINTENDO'S platform pranks! Worth buying a Famicom for?

It's the latest *Super Mario* game and it's on Nintendo's Super Famicom. We've had *Super Mario Bros I, II, III* and now *IV*. Is Mario really worth yet another sequel or are Nintendo getting the *Rocky* syndrome?

All the action happens in - surprise, surprise - Super Marioland, a plac e that bears a suspicious resemblance to a 2D scrolling map. There are a 100 tasks for Mario to complete before he can rescue the Princess Wendy from an evil lizard. Each task resides in a sub-level, which is accessed via one of the transporters strewn around the pathways of Marioland. Guide Mario to one and a quick hit of fire zaps you into a scrolling world where the idea is to get from end to the other.

Sounds easy? You're right it does but you reckoned without the large array of platformy game obstacles getting in your way. Get through and Mario will return the map which'll change slightly, opening up new paths and allowing you explore further.

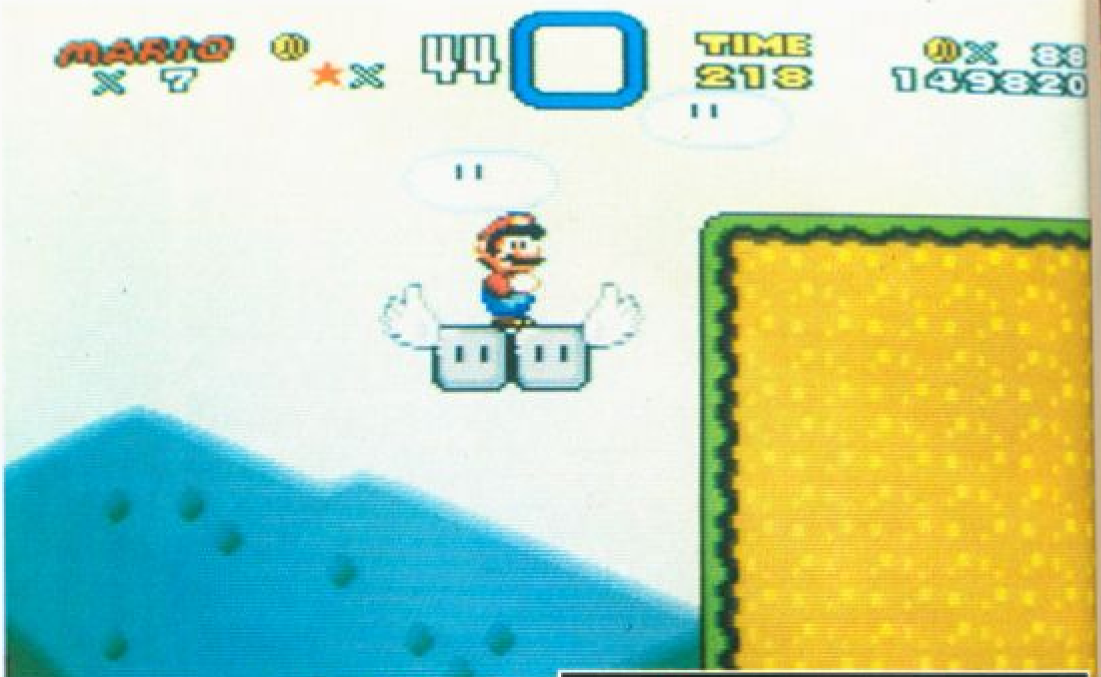
After completing a castle or ghost house on the Super Marioland map you get the chance to RAMsave your game onto the battery backed up cartridge memeory. When you plug in the next time there's your game on the title screen menu along with the amount of tasks you completed. It's great carrying around *Super Marioland* cartridge with an impressive saved game - it's like having 27-er conker!

There's a great many things to be picked up along the way, many of which add to Mario's repertoire of dextral skills: a cloak enables Mario to fly; a flower gives him atomic gob; and a star awards limited invulnerability. Best of all are the blocks containing eggs - hit one of these and out pops a rideable two-legged dinosaur hatches with a sticky fire-button-activated tongue that can eat up all sorts of annoying sprites.

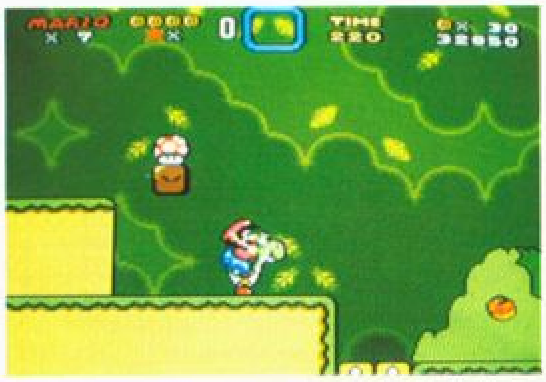
This is a great game. The map structure over the top of the more traditional platform screens adds a depth not found in bland copy cats. It's blatantly obvious how much love and pride has been spent on the development of what is undeniably the state-of-the-art in entertainment software.

All-in-all *Super Marioland* rates as just about the best reason in the World for going out and getting yourself a Super Famicon. I know it's hard justifying a £200 splurge for a games machine but with a *Super Marioland* cartridge bundled into the deal I'd say it's well worth it. Check out out your local console importer ASAP.

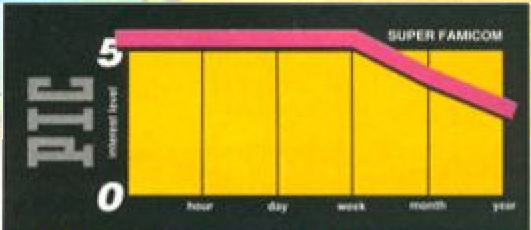
● **Gary Liddon**



On a wing and a block! To get around Marioland you'll need every weird and wonderful means at your disposal - including flying platforms!

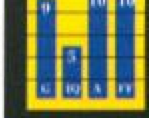


Heigh- ho, Greeny, away! With a baby lizard for a mount you can go critter catching using the giant Gila's sticky tongue.



ACE RATING

910



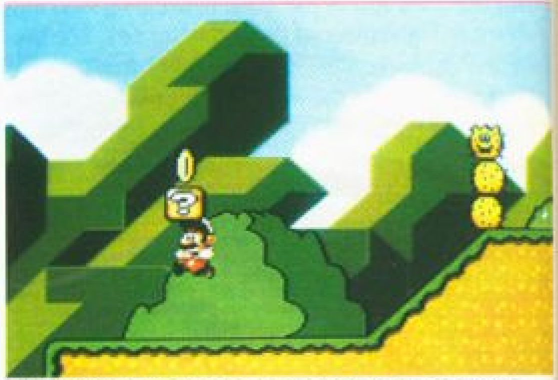
AMIGA

With its vast array of interesting characters to contend with, amazing multiway parallaxed graphics and superb upbeat soundtrack (far better than the usual modern day rubbish) *Marioland* is a treat for the eyes and the ears. Add smashing gameplay of the most addictive variety and you've got the one of the best games ever. The ability to save up to three positions means you'll not get bored having to play the early levels over and over. There's also a brilliant end-game sequence - I know 'cos I've completed the game and seen it (smug grin!). Nintendo sees *Marioland* as such an excellent product they reckon it sells their machine. They're not far wrong.

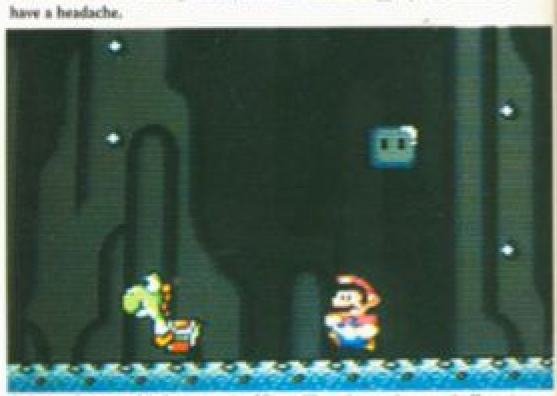
RELEASE DETAILS

SUPER FAMICOM *Cartridge bundled with machine*

ACE TrailBlazer



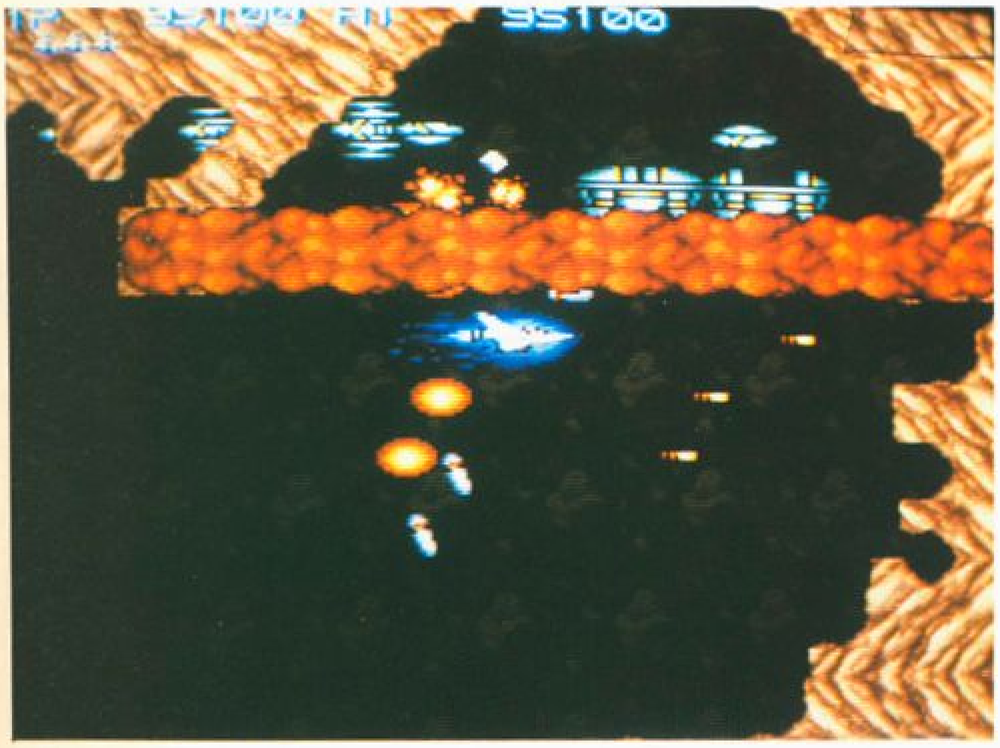
After all the block busting Mario performs with his noggin you'd think he'd have a headache.



Going underground in hot pursuit of lizzy. The echo on the sound effects in the caves is excellent

GRADIUS III

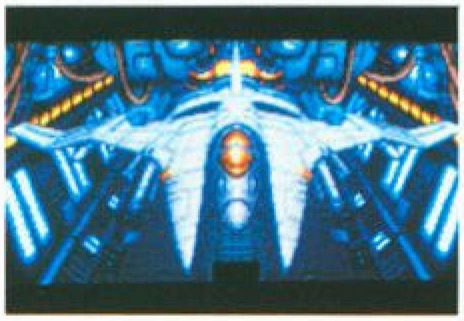
KONAMI introduces a Dark Force into the Super Famicom



Once thoroughly tooled up, you can inflict untold damage on the alien hordes.

Emergency lighting kicks-in and the darkness fades away. Huge lifting machinery brings your fighter into view, the hangar bay opens and the dropship releases its grip on you. Cut to outside and your fighter launches into space, its engines open up in a flash of pure blue light. Your fighter takes you to a new planet at sub-light speed. Add a cinematic music score and sound effects and you have the impressive opening sequence to *Gradius III*, the first shoot'em-up released on the Super Famicom.

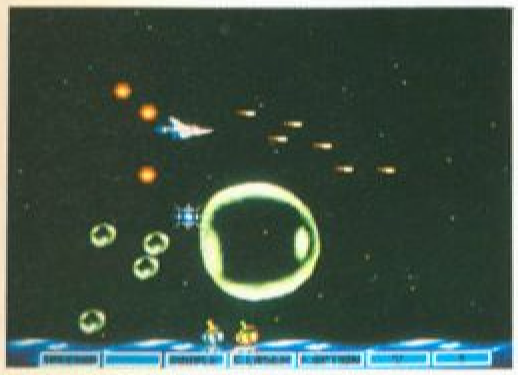
The aim of the game is to make your way through 10 stages of hostile environments populated by 22 different kinds of enemy machines and life-forms. The end of each stage is guarded by a massive boss who can take a severe battering before they're finally destroyed.



Prepare for battle.

Gradius III takes the concept of collectible weapon systems a stage further by allowing you to select the type of ordnance you can pick-up during the game. Your Special Air Fighter can handle 29 different types of weapon such as spread bombs, tail guns, ripple lasers and full barrier shields. You have a simple choice at the start of the game, go for a preselected group of weapons or edit your own suite of goodies. You're then ready to take-on the Dark Force.

When you destroy alien craft some of them leave pods which can be collected and traded for your preselected weapon system. A bar along the bottom of the screen splits these weapons systems into seven categories (Speed Up; Missile, Double, Laser, Option, ? and !). As you pick-up an alien pod the next category of system is highlighted, this weapon can then be activated at anytime with the flick of a button. A male American voice quietly confirming the weapons activation. This power-up process can be switched to full automatic if you can't be bothered to keep an eye on which weapon is currently highlighted. At the height of the fighting it's very easy to concentrate on getting a bigger laser rather than blasting a Baoh bionic bomber. This can prove to be a fatal mistake.



Watch out for the big floating alien things of doom.

It's hard to believe this is only the first shoot'em-up to be released on the Nintendo Super Famicom. The Amiga has been around for over five years and nobody has produced a shoot'em-up that comes anywhere near this stormer from Konami. *Gradius III* is another reason to buy a Super Famicom... along with Super Mario World, Populous and F-Zero. And don't forget this £100 wonder machine has been on sale for less than three months. It's unbelievable!

● **Rik Haynes**

Special thanks to Shekhana Consoles (081 340 8565) for supplying the cart.

HARDCORE HARDWARE

With a choice of 29 different weapons to fit into your fighter, fatal mistakes can be made. Here's a guide to get you going...

Always edit your own suite of weapon systems, the preselected bunch is reserved for the foolish and lazy.

SPEED UP

A fast fighter can get you quickly out of a tight spot. Don't be greedy or you'll go out of control.

MISSILE

Small Spread provides tight saturation ground bombing but requires support of fast forward-firing weapons.

Back 2-Way Missile is a good all-rounder, unfortunately you have to move ahead of the target to strike it.

DOUBLE

Go for the original Normal Double as the 45 degree angled shot gives you superb fire support when attacking forward positions.

LASER

Energy Laser is a devastating weapon, though it takes valuable seconds to charge so its rate of fire is lower than any other system.

Cyclone Laser produces long bursts of fast laser fire.

OPTION

Rolling Option has the multiples rotating around your fighter therefore adding to all-round protection.

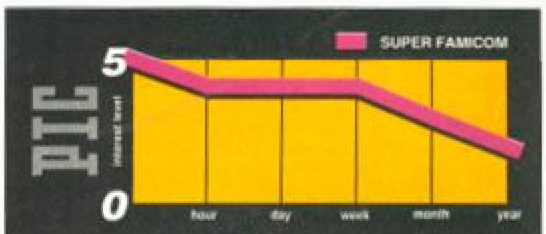
?

Force Field absorbs attack from all directions, its depletion level is easy to see.

!

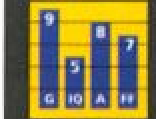
Remain Option is the quickest way to build-up a formidable weapons platform.

So what's my recommended weapon systems set-up? Speed Upx3, Back 2-Way Missile, Normal Double, Energy Laser, Rolling Option, Force Field and Remain Option for daring pilots or Speed Upx2, Small Spread, Normal Double, Cyclone Laser, Rolling Option, Force Field and Remain Option for a balanced no-compromise fighter.



ACE RATING

880



SUPER FAMICOM

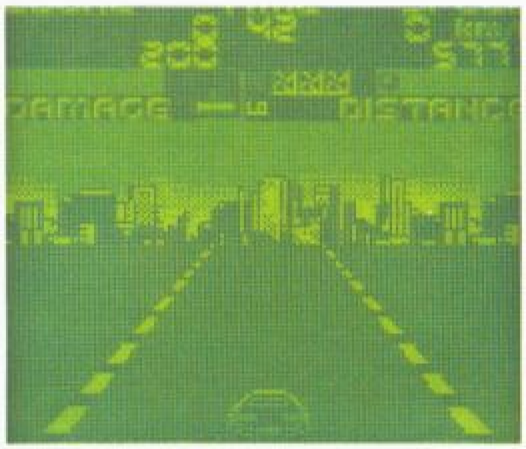
While the formula may be tried and tested, the implementation of Gradius makes it stand head and shoulders above all other shoot em ups of recent months. The graphics capabilities of the Famicom are, of course, a boost. Nevertheless, Gradius grabbed me from the start, and didn't let go.

RELEASE DETAILS

SUPER FAMICOM £34.99 OUT NOW

PRIME DIRECTIVES

Robocop, Chase H.Q., Ghostbusters II, Contra... Rik Haynes previews four new Gameboy titles!

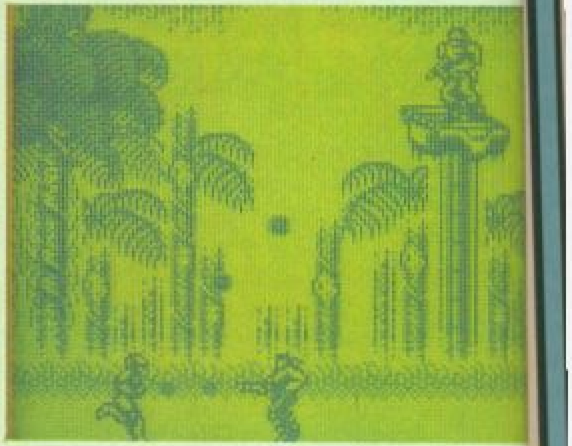


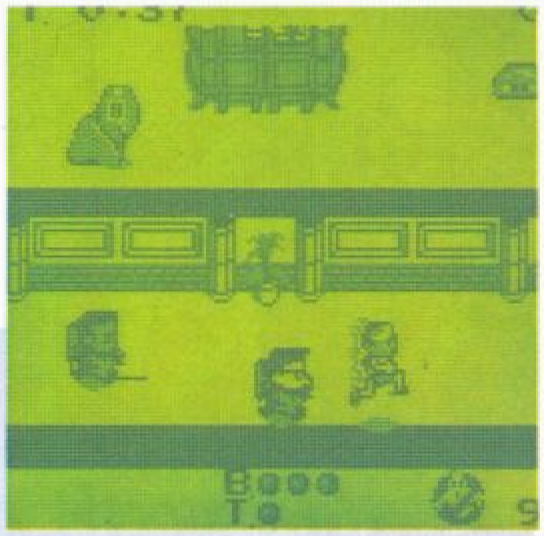
CHASE H.Q.

Now here's a job. The Police want you to drive a fast sports car and capture some crafty criminal racers. Shift into high gear and speed down the twisting highway at 318km per hour. A turbo option gives you the edge over the competition, provided you use it wisely. All you have to do is avoid a few obstacles and out-drive everybody on the road. Taito's Miami Vice inspired racer chaser has been adapted to the Gameboy by a British software development team. Unfortunately, they haven't done as good a job as Ocean's conversion to the Spectrum. What used to be a simple but enjoyable game has been ruined by poor control, jerky scrolling and unforgivable pauses in the action. At this stage secondary lapses of quality start to show through and annoy you even further. David Whittaker's music, for example, is appalling. Even the redesigned text looks out of place. I'm surprised Taito allowed this game to be released. *Chase H.Q.* needs a serious amount of bodywork and possibly a new engine. Bring in those panel-beaters, quick.

CONTRA

Nasty rebels are waiting for you in the jungles of South America. Rambo fought for honour, justice and the right to buy a fast-food franchise. Now it's your turn. Equipped with a suitably large machine gun, headband and no-shirt – what better way to show off your muscles – you must conquer five separate areas filled with enemy soldiers, gun emplacements, mines, tanks and submarines. These areas alternate between side- and top-views of the battle. Your commando character can jump and duck his way through some pretty hairy situations. Power-up pods provide three-way fire, homing missiles and a wide-area attack weapon. The action never stops, and neither does your determination to fight right to the end. Things get a little strange in area four, thanks to a horde of insects, and a few surprises lay in-store during the final area. The backdrops in *Contra* have a similar feel to those seen in Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on the Gameboy. It's likely that these two games were written by the same programming team, though Konami is staying tight-lipped about 'who does what' in its Japanese software labs. *Contra* is easily the best of the bunch played here. It is recommended without hesitation by everybody in the ACE office. Now get off, it's my go!



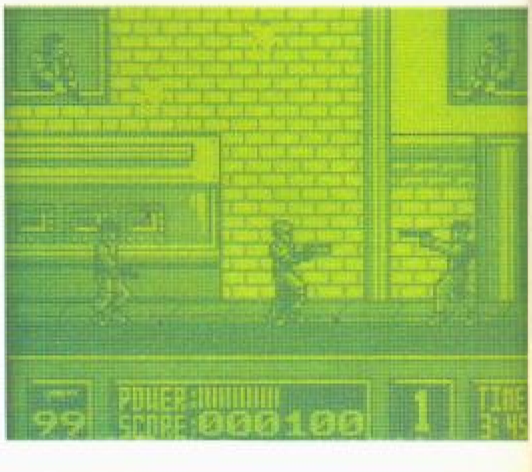


GHOSTBUSTERS II

Oh dear, baby Oscar has been kidnapped by a spook called Vigo, an evil spirit from the past with an aim to rule the future. Who ya gonna call? This is your chance to be a Ghostbuster and drive these frightful ghosts from New York City. Start by choosing your busting two-man team from the four famous characters, played by Bill Murray and Dan Ackyrod in the two ghostly movies. One will use a Proton Beamer to paralyse ghosties for a few seconds, the other carries the traps to suck these slimers up. Make your way through 16 levels of offices, subway mazes and trashed art museums but beware of nasty creepies like The Blob, Floating Head and Whirling Dervish. You'll also meet fellow Ghostbusters who can supply additional ghostbusting tools such as a wall smasher, super trap and moodslimer. If a ghost touches one of your characters they will stay unconscious for a moment and lose a trap or beamer. The game is over once you've lost all the beamers or traps. The graphics are especially cute as you'd expect. You can tell the game was created by Japanese designers, despite the fact that Activision has licensed it, because the characters have small bodies and exceptionally large heads. A trademark of oriental comic art. Fun for all the family, as they say in tacky adverts.

ROBOCOP

The computer cop from a violent near future is ready to law down the law in downtown Detroit. *Robocop* from Ocean takes you through 10 stages split into three different gameplay styles. The main game has your metal man walking the streets of the city, taking out the criminal scum that infest the place. You avoid enemy fire by ducking and jumping. If you're hit you'll lose some precious energy – you're deleted once this is depleted. On the way, you'll discover objects to collect. Baby food increases your energy level for instance. Sub-games help to increase your interest in the game. The hostage scenes and shooting gallery are a 'hit the target with a cross-hair sight' affair. The later allows Robocop to recalibrate his aiming skills and gain some extra energy. The photo-fit sub-game has you matching faces, within a limited amount of time, by changing features like hair, mouth and ears. The game has a worthy variation of graphics and the thumpy soundtrack from the movie. *Robocop* on the Gameboy is a lot harder than its computer cousins. It should provide a lasting challenge for gamers with more than 20 seconds to comply.



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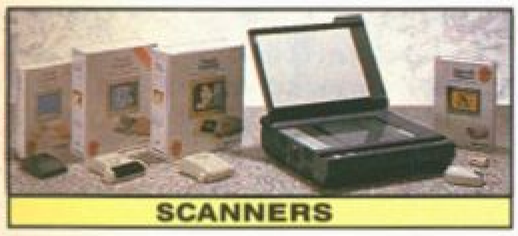
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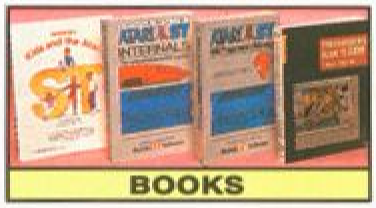
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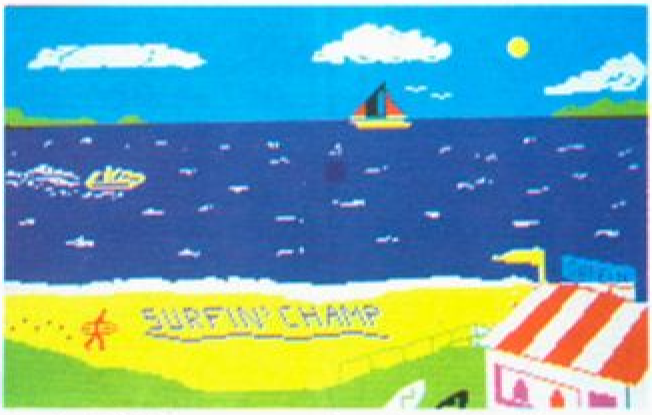
SURF CHAMP

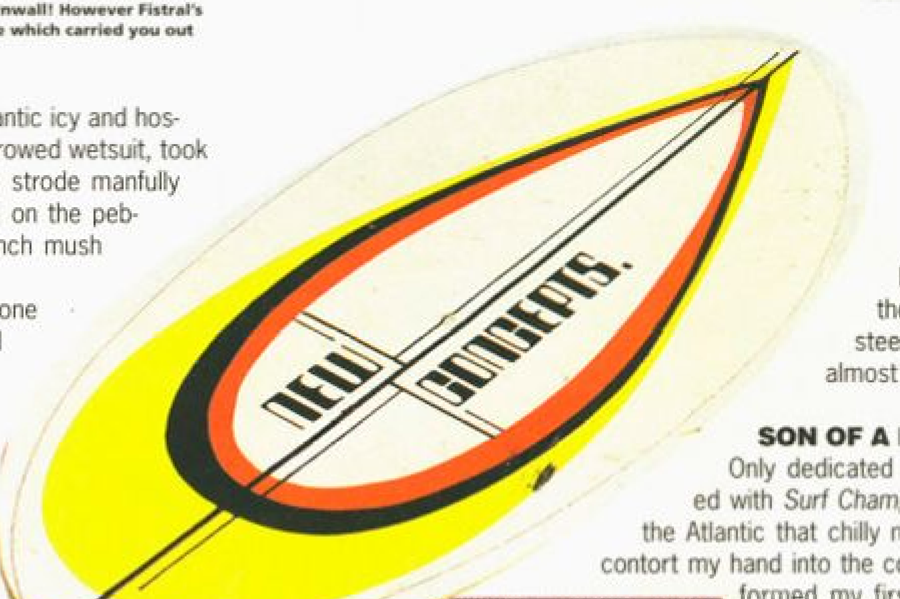
Departing Hall Of Fame curator John Minson drops in on the Shack Of Shame in search of the wild surf.



Somehow Surf Champ never managed to conjure up visions of bronzed surfers at Malibu... or even pasty Englishmen in Cornwall! However Fistral's tides were accurately mapped, including the rip-tide which carried you out where the waves came from.

The sky was gunmetal grey, the Atlantic icy and hostile. I tugged on the zip of my borrowed wetsuit, took a firm grip on the surfboard, and strode manfully towards the ocean. The waves crashed on the pebbles with all the majesty that a three inch mush can muster.

It was hardly Hawaii but it was my one and only attempt at surfing. As I splashed hopelessly in the shallows, I realised why wave riding isn't indigenous to these chilly shores. In fact a computer simulation, played by the warmth of a Spectrum power supply, seemed a better idea each time I fell off the board.



SURFIN' CPU

The program which brought me to that chilly shore was the product of scientist and amateur surfer, Norman MacMillan, a man with a mission to introduce his sport to landlocked home computer users everywhere. *Surf Champ* wasn't just a game but a true simulation with real beaches and accurate wave behaviour.

Better still, there was none of the *Track And Field*-style joystick jiggling which was so popular around '84. *Surf Champ* came complete with a six inch surfboard which sat on your Spectrum's keys. You controlled your board just as a real surfer would.

There was, however, one problem with this concept. It was cr*p. Or at least, that's what most reviewers concluded. If only they'd known the exhilerating fear of going down, down, down while your board soared over your head, they too might have appreciated MacMillan's unique vision.

Your bespoke plastic surfboard featured special underside protrusions to punish those rubber keys.

The beach that came with the program was Fistral i Cornwall, one of Britain's more credible surfing spots wit waves that provide an ideal learning environment. More challenging locations, including the notorious Pipeline, were promised though these big wave bays never materialised.

Once you'd taken note of the day's weather and outfitted yourself accordingly (no Bermuda shorts if the temperature was sub-zero), you balanced the plastic surfboard on the Speccie's rubber keys. Next you moved your surfer along the beach to find a place to enter the water. Only terminal bohos failed to exploit the rip-tide which carried you towards the horizon with minimal expenditure of energy. Every time you encountered an incoming wave you dipped the nose of your board to avoid being carried back to the shore. Eventually you reached a satisfactory starting point and waited, watching the wave patterns, until a promising set arrived. Then it was time to ride, ride, ride that wild surf.

As you caught your wave the screen cut from the panoramic view of the bay to a close-up of your surfer. Resting your hand on the miniature board, you moved it from side to side or backwards and forwards to perform various radical manouevres. Scoring mirrored the system used in pro-surf contests, with maximum points for gnarly moves such as shooting into the air then jack-knifing back down.

You rode the wave for as long as possible, eventually trying to glide off without wiping out. If you had the energy left, and this depended on water temperature and the equipment you'd chosen at the start of the game as much as your acrobatics, you paddled out again for another attempt.

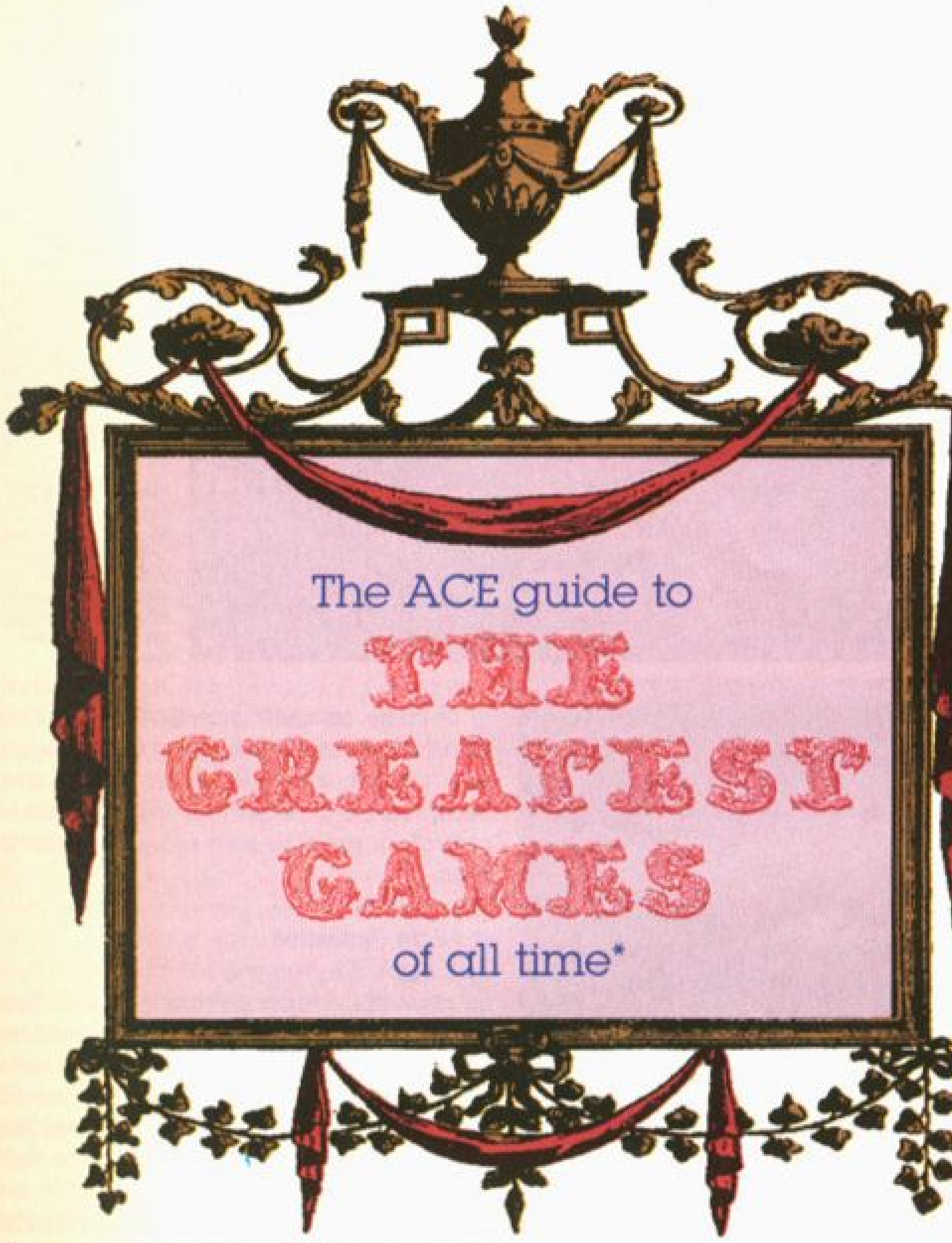
If everything had worked as described, *Surf Champ* would have been an indisputable classic. But the problems started with that unique selling point. Keeping the plastic board on the Spectrum's keys was a task only slightly more difficult than mastering the real thing. Then, to add insult to injury, Sir Clive issued the +2 with its inhospitable, hard plastic keys. After that the unattractive graphics and steepish learning curve seemed almost minor quibbles.

SON OF A BEACH

Only dedicated California dreamers persisted with *Surf Champ*. But having swallowed half the Atlantic that chilly morning I was determined to contort my hand into the correct pose. And when I performed my first aerial and hot-dogged all the way to shore, I really started to appreciate the program.

So maybe Norman MacMillan was possessed of an unworldy idealism. Undoubtedly *Surf Champ* did lack the graphic sophistication which was standard by the mid-eighties. But how sad that nobody noticed the complex calculations of wave behaviour, the ingenious keyboard *reading algorithm, the novel attempt to create* an accurate simulation of this exciting, esoteric sport.

Despite a grant from the Irish development agency, *Surf Champ* was destined to wipe out. But for all its irritating eccentricies and severe shortcomings, not to mention that bizarre surfboard, it remains a tribute to lateral thinking in game design and deserves a cult corner in the collection of any serious software archivist.



The ACE guide to THE GREATEST GAMES of all time*

Undeterred by the hordes of angry torch-waving villagers besieging Castle ACE following last month's controversial choices, here are the final Great Games lists! The criteria for nomination (in case you missed last month's issue or have simply forgotten) are as follows:

(1) The game must have originated on a home computer - that's why games like *Rainbow Islands* and *Planetoid* (the definitive *Defender* clone on the BBC B have (regretfully) been omitted. However, games that have radically mutated an arcade idea are valid (i.e. *Thrust*, despite its obvious *Asteroid* and *Lunar Lander* roots, successfully mixed the two to make a totally different hybrid).

(2) The game must be a 'landmark', in the sense that it introduced a new concept or technique into the gaming world and/or advanced the 'state-of-the-art' in its genre.

(3) The game must be enjoyable - obviously! - and have long-lasting appeal.

We consider the games in this list to be essential components of any gaming buff's collection, if not for their gameplay then simply for their place in history. Each game is described, and details provided on who manufactured it and on which format the game is best (n.b. 'All formats' indicates that the game was equally classic on all implementations).

Dear ACE,
what a load of cr*p!

We're always open to persuasion that we've erred in our choices. If you have any suggestions, then write and tell us on a postcard at: ACE Great Games, ACE, Box 2, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, along with your (brief) arguments. A draw will be held on 8th March 1991, when we will draw ten cards from the bag and send them a FREE piece of software, so remember to add your name, address and computer format to the postcard.

PART 2

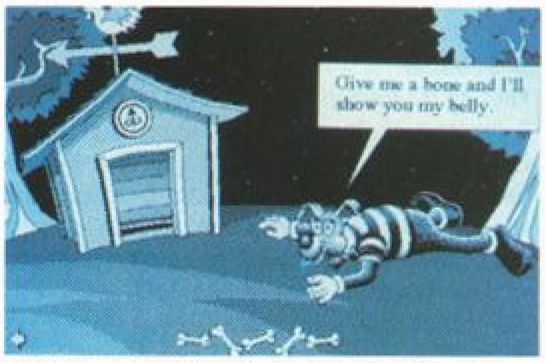
Batten the hatches and lock up your daughters! It's time for Part 2 of our pompous proclamations!

ORIGINAL GAMES

● *3D Monster Maze*
J. Graye Software (ZX81)
You could hear the jaws dropping when this was unveiled. Viewed in chunky first-person 3D, you had to find your way out of a maze while avoiding the unwanted culinary attentions of a large Tyrannosaurus Rex. Didn't seem much cop initially, but when ol' Rexy lumbered into view...!

● *Ant Attack*
Quicksilva (ZX Spectrum)
Arguably the game that (literally) added a new dimension to the way games were viewed, and probably the first truly non-sexist. Choosing to play either boy or girl, you had to rescue your partner from an isometric-3D city infested by giant ants. Stunning (for their time) graphics. Fondly remembered in ACE Issue 38.

● *Cosmic Osmo*
Activision (Macintosh)
Used Hypertext to give you a (marginally limited) interactive environment. Not much of a game, as such, more of an enjoyable pastime. Each location in the game was depicted graphically. Mouse clicking on objects or people would elicit some form of action (i.e clicking on a door would take you through it) or response (i.e. clicking on a pumpkin makes it form a face and bite your pointer - ow!). Could this be the shape of games to come...? See ACE Issues 23 and 24 for full details.



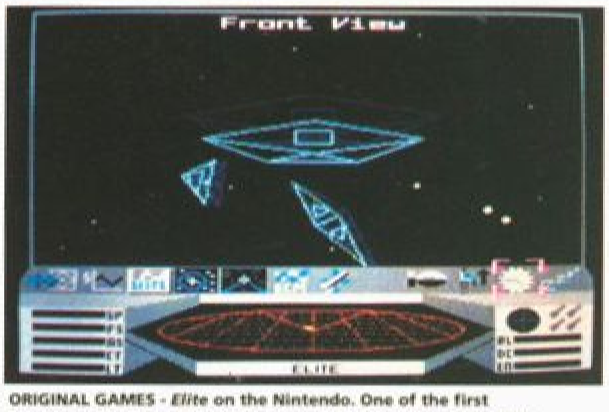
ORIGINAL GAMES - *Cosmic Osmo* on the Macintosh. Uses *Hypertext* technology to generate an amazing level of interactivity.

● *Driller*
Incentive (All formats)
A puzzle-cum-adventure game where the environment was depicted in Freescape, a polygon-based 3D system allowing total freedom of view and movement. Later games improved the basic system, but *Driller* was the first. Reviewed way back in ACE Issue 4.

● *Elite*
Acornsoft (BBC B)
Probably responsible for selling many BBCs, this is the archetypical space fighting-and-trading game which has been much imitated but (many would argue) never surpassed. The intergalactic action, depicted in wireframe 3D, provided the immediate pull-you-in thrills but the trading at space stations, plus possible mission assignments, added the depth needed to make this an all-time Great.

● *Little Computer People*
Activision (C64)
On booting up the game for the very first time you were shown a cut-away sideview of a residential house. Wait a few seconds and your very own unique Little Computer Person would appear, explore, then move in, suitcase and all. Some even had their own pets. You could interact with him/her to a limited degree. Not much of a game, admittedly, but a truly unique landmark product.

● *Rescue on Fractalus*
Lucasfilm/Activision (C64)
A perilous rescue mission to save shot-down spacepilots forced to crash-land on barren



ORIGINAL GAMES - *Elite* on the Nintendo. One of the first games to generate the feeling of a huge Universe, with beings living their lives irrespective of your actions.

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* Probably

Fractalus. This involved flying down narrow rocky canyons whilst avoiding or destroying alien gun emplacements and ships. The 3D view was generated with fractals to give a convincingly rugged look to the terrain. And how could anyone forget the shock when you rescued an alien pilot by mistake for the first time?

● Sentinel
Firebird (All formats)
A massive challenge - 10000 levels! Every level is a battle of wits between you and the evil Sentinel on a large chequered landscape, as you try to absorb each other's energy to the point of destruction. Fast reactions and a clear mind are vital for success.

● Splat!
Incentive (ZX Spectrum)
Set in a scrolling maze viewed from overhead, the novel feature here was that the scroll moved independently of you! You had to move to try and keep up with it, else risk being Splat-ted against the edge of the screen. So simple, so addictive, so good.

● Thrust
Firebird (ZX Spectrum)
An overhaul of the old *Lunar Lander* idea. You fly a spaceship by means of rotate left/right and thrust, with the aim of finding a load pod somewhere in a series of treacherous, missile-base infested, caverns. *Oids* (FTL/Mirrorsoft) did it better, but *Thrust* did it first.

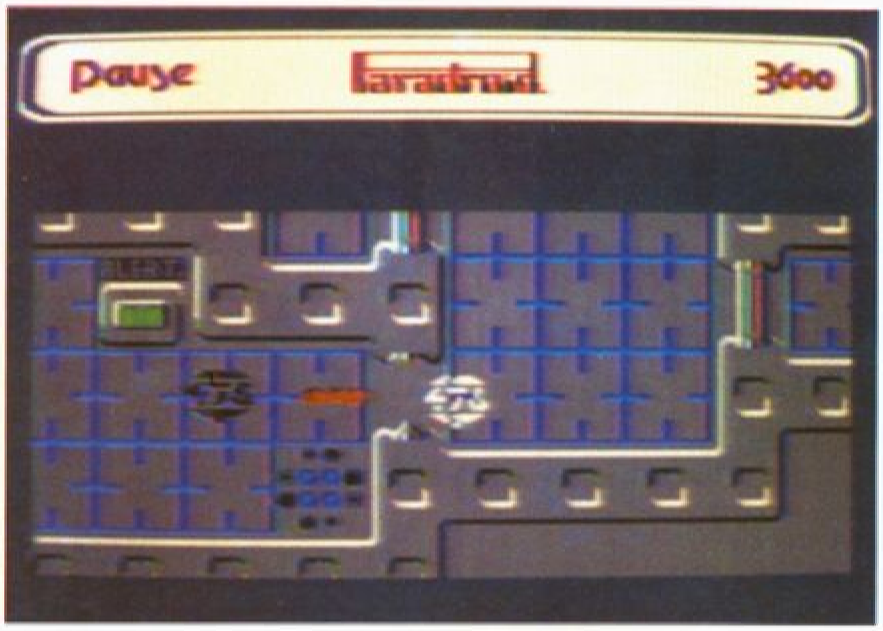
SHOOT-'EM-UPS

● Jet Pac
Ultimate Play the Game (ZX Spectrum)
Hard to believe it was really running on a humble Speccy when it first appeared. For the first time the adman's term 'arcade quality' rang true. Jetman flys around a screen teeming with aliens, trying to recover one of four rocket pieces and drop them off at an assembly point. Mega-tastic, mate!

● Paradroid
Hewson (C64)
Andrew Braybrook's next project after *Uridium*; another shoot-'em-up, but totally different. Robots have gone haywire on a series of giant starships. Your job is to beam on-board and destroy all the rogues, accomplished by straight blasting or 'taking over' other robots and thus adopting their abilities (vital if you were to destroy some of the heavier 'droids). Recently updated for the 16-bit machines, but the C64 version is the definitive one.

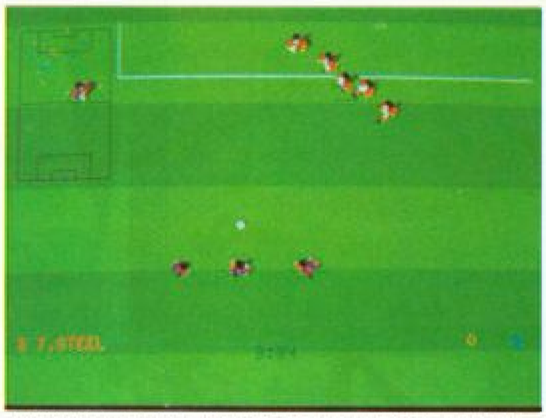
● Uridium
Hewson (C64)
First British shoot-'em-up on the C64 to feature impressive (fixed) light-source shaded graphics and ultra-fast, ultra-smooth sprite-based action as your ship soars to and fro above 12 vast Dreadnoughts, blasting the opposition. Programmed by code-wizard Andrew Braybrook. Still a game to fire up on a dark winter's evening.

● Wizball
Ocean (C64)



◄ **SHOOT-'EM-UPS** - ***Uridium* on the C64. Combines strategy and action in an incredibly addictive mix. Recently updated for the Amiga and Atari ST and called Paradroid 90.**

STRATEGY GAMES ► *Populous: The Promised Lands* on the Amiga. An icon-controlled classic from Bullfrog, who struck programming gold again with the recent *Powermonger*.



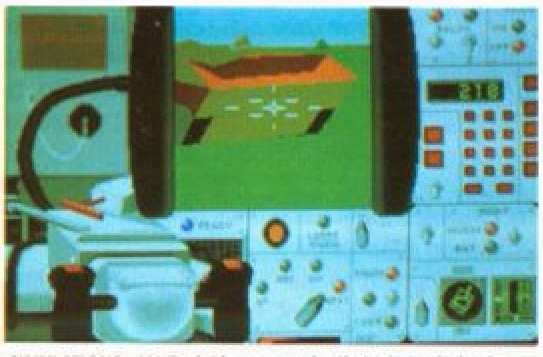
SPORTS SIMULATIONS - ***Kick Off 2* on the Atari ST. Could this be the best two-player game ever? Without doubt it's the best footy sim - and you don't have to be a footy fan to enjoy it.**

A Wizard and his Cat try to save their homeworld from grey drabness by metamorphosing into the bouncing Wizball and the orbiting Catellite, travelling around the various levels of Wizworld, shooting aliens, picking up power-ups, collecting colour drops and mixing them together in the Lab. One of the most original and slick shoot-'em-ups ever. Sensible Software are apparently working on a (totally different) sequel.

● Zarch
Acornsoft (Archimedes)
Written by David Braben of *Elite* fame, the action took place on a 3D polygon-generated patchwork landscape being infected with red weed by attacking aliens. Flying a highly manoeuvrable fighter armed with laser and missiles, you have to hunt and destroy the invaders. Interestingly, you view the action in third person, with your ship hanging in the middle of 'space'. An incredible example of the power of the Archimedes. Reviewed in ACE Issue 3.

SIMULATIONS

● Air Traffic Controller
Hewson (ZX Spectrum)
Renowned as one of the largest and longest selling examples of early micro simulation and helped establish the sim as an important category of home computer entertainment. *ATC* looks astonishingly primitive by today's standards and wasn't exactly a graphic stunner in its own time, but it reeked of authenticity and kept would-be controllers glued to their screens well into the night.



SIMULATIONS - ***M1 Tank Platoon* on the IBM PC. A whole platoon of armoured battlewagons at your disposal and a wide variety of missions to complete.**

● Flight Simulator
SubLogic (PC)
Established the whole genre of micro-based flight sims with complete authority and has never been seriously challenged. The *Flight Simulator* series gives you authentic flying experience on your PC and although later versions include tremendous graphic detail, the emphasis remains on flight procedures and techniques. If you can fly this competently, you're on the way to a PPL. *FL2* was reviewed in ACE Issue 5.

● M1 Tank Platoon
Microprose (All formats)
Opened up a new dimension for tank simulations by introducing a platoon of vehicles and thereby vastly increasing the tactical and strategic interest. Microprose combined multi-vehicle control with an excellent 3D topographical landscape, mission variety, and incidental sequences to great effect. Reviewed in ACE Issue 27.

● Sim City
Maxis (All formats)
Easy. Build a living, breathing city. Just put a few roads and buildings down. But they need power, and food, and schools, and airports, and... all within a limited budget. Try and please all the people all of the time. On second thought,it's not easy at all. Reviewed in ACE Issue 24.

● Wing Commander
Origin/Mindscape (IBM PC)
Although in essence another 3D space combat game, the presentation lifts it into new realms. The ships are ray-traced bitmapped graphics, scaled in real time, providing amazingly realistic combat scenes (akin to *Star Wars*). Between-combat events are animated to an almost film quality level. The nearest to an interactive movie yet seen. Reviewed in ACE Issue 39.

SPORTS SIMULATIONS

● 4D Sports Boxing
Mindscape (PC)
The first in the '4D' series of games from Mindscape. The most successful and entertaining version of the noble art to appear on the small screen. Boxers resembling *Dire Straits' Money For Nothin'* characters shuffle around the ring and clobber each other. The infinitely rede-

OT-'EM-UPS -
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finable camera angles, realism of the action and speed of the polygon-driven fighters make this a true classic. Reviewed in ACE Issue 40.

● *Kick Off 1 & 2*
Anco (Amiga & Atari ST)
Using an overhead scrolling view of the pitch and players, programmer Dino Dini produced what have to be the definitive computer footy games. When in possession the ball didn't stick to your foot as your scooted around (unlike most other soccer sims), so a high degree of skill was needed to get the ball in the net. Supremely playable, and the best two-player game ever. *KO2* reviewed in ACE Issue 34.

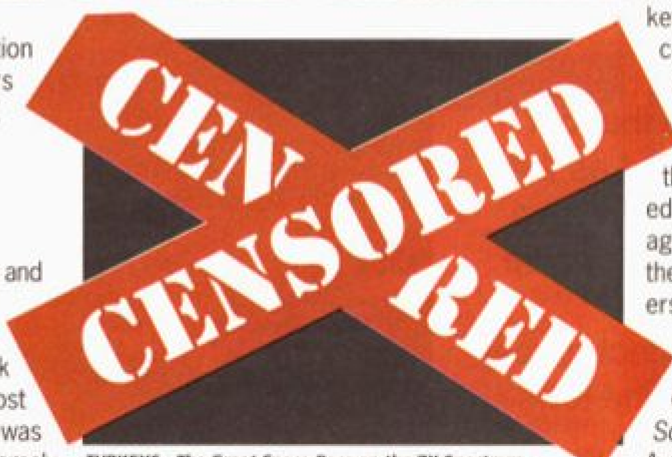
● *International Soccer*
Commodore (C64)
The first footy game where you actually felt you had some control over what happened on the pitch. Large sprites moved swiftly over a scrolling pitch viewed from the side. So good, it's being bundled with the C64GS - and it's 6 years old!

● *Way of the Exploding Fist*
Melbourne House (C64)
Blood-curdling cries from the opponents, devastatingly fast action and excellent animation ensured *Fist* stood head and shoulders above other fight game. The variety of moves and the fight-a-friend options were genuine breakthroughs. And the sound from the 64 version added atmosphere.

● *World Games*
Epyx/US Gold (C64)
Epyx produced a whole series of sport sims, with this one arguably being the best. A wide range of varied events, such as log rolling, caber tossing, Sumo wrestling and cliff diving. Each required far more skill than the joystick-waggling antics of similar sims. Hugely enjoyable, especially when you got your friends around.

STRATEGY GAMES

● *Balance of Power*
Mindscape (IBM PC)
Chris Crawford's seminal 16-bit strategy game gave gamesters a hand in global conflict and remains a classic of its kind. Later attempts to follow it up (even by Crawford himself) have all fallen short of this engaging game in which one or two players (representing Russia or the US) battle it out for world supremacy, forging alliances, supplying arms and financial aid, and engaging in other devious geopolitical activities.



TURKEYS - *The Great Space Race* on the ZX Spectrum. Sorry, folks! The Editor deemed this screen shot too disturbing for younger readers and it had to be pulled out at the last moment.

● *Lords of Midnight*
Rainbird (All formats)
A unique technical achievement for its time, *LOM* offered Mike Singleton's revolutionary 'Landscaping' technique, presenting umpteen thousands of graphic locations as you wandered about the map. A brilliant combination of very basic war-gaming concepts with exploration and fantasy elements, the scale of *LOM*, its graphic excellence, and simple-to-master but difficult-to-triumph scenario make this an enduring classic and the clear forerunner of latter-day megagame *Midwinter*.

● *Populous*
Electronic Arts (All formats)
They say you can't play God. Wrong! Lead your followers to prosperity and victory against an opposing deity's believers. The landscape was viewed in scrolling isometric-3D, and could be raised and lowered at your whim. Become powerful enough and you could start inflicting volcanoes and earthquakes on the populace. Amazingly, all control was by a clutch of simple icons. Reviewed in ACE Issue 19.

● *Powermonger*
Electronic Arts (All formats)
Written by Bullfrog, programmers of *Populous*. You play a warlord with just 20 followers washed up on the shore of one of 200 islands, ripe for conquest. Similar in look to *Populous*, the landscape is now formed from polygons for far more flexibility in how it's viewed. Icons makes control very easy. Incredible attention to detail - a real living, breathing world in silicon. Reviewed in ACE Issue 39.

● *UMS I & II*
Rainbird (All formats)
Programs that changed the face of computer wargaming, though surprisingly they have engendered few clones. *UMS* gave complete control of the battle process and – its main selling point – even added a topographical map. Despite some shortcomings (the display in *UMS I* is horribly cluttered) these programs remain superb examples of dedicated wargaming software technology. *UMS I* reviewed in ACE Issue 4.

TURKEYS

● *The Great Space Race*
Legend (ZX Spectrum)
Eagerly awaited second title from the company that produced *Valhalla*, *TGSR* burst onto the market as a specially commissioned Bob Foss cover competition on Personal Computer Games and a game that was written almost entirely in BASIC, boasting animation that would have shamed a ZX80. Astonished phone calls to the Legend office by the PCG staff were greeted by floods of tears and threats of legal action against anyone and anybody. Barely weeks later, the £15.99 game was selling for 50p as retailers desperately tried to shift stock and Legend vanished from the face of the earth.

● *Legion*
Software Projects (ZX Spectrum)
A classic software bungle. This text and graphics adventure set in Ancient Rome soon required the player to go UP the stairs. Unfortunately the parser couldn't cope with the word DOWN, so the game ended at that point. 'Oh f**k!' screamed the software house MD to then-PCG-reviewer Steve Cooke on being given the joyful tidings.

● *Catacombs*
Anirog (C64)
A wonderfully unplayable graphic adventure which certainly believed in tough puzzles. The first one was completely insoluble and gamesters were therefore unable to play the game for more than a few seconds. The problem was that the graphics on the first screen were far from clear, and the required input was TRACE SYMBOL. Funnily enough, no-one (except the programmer, who rang magazines frantically requesting them to print the solution) hit on this particular combination of verb and noun.

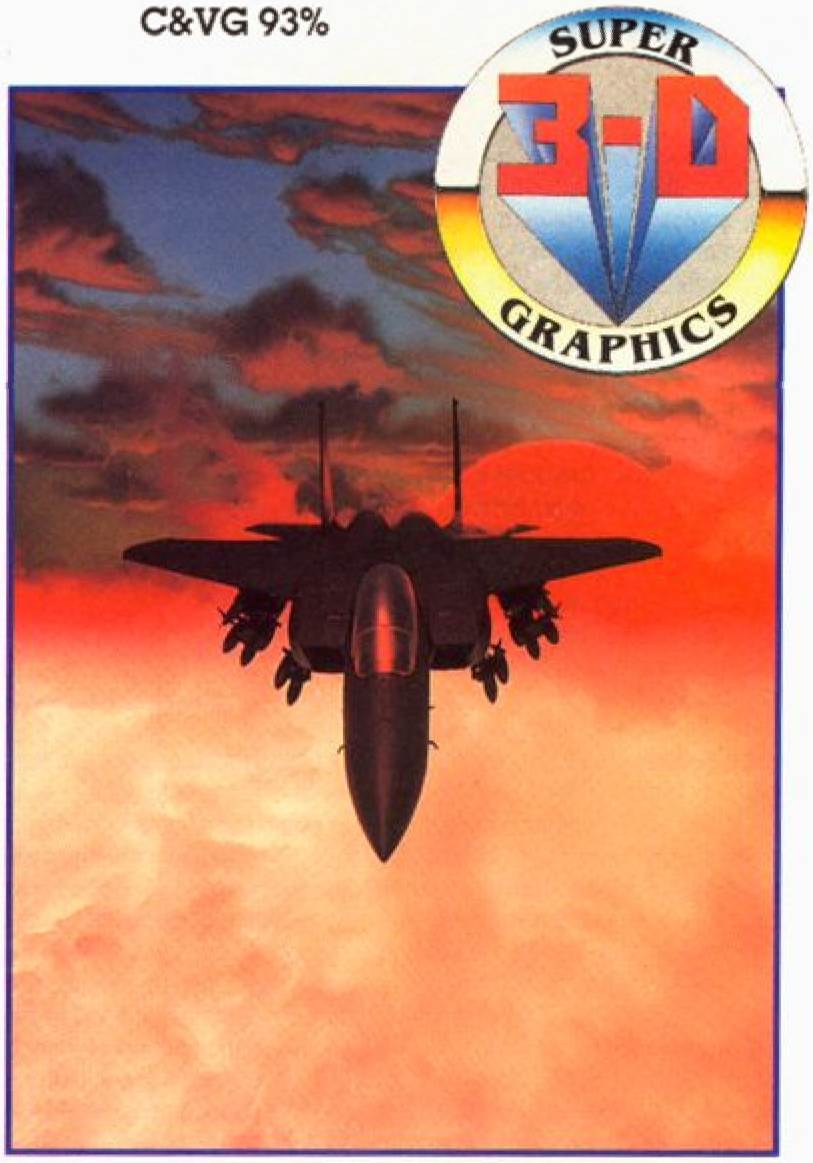
● *'Owzat*
Virgin (BBC)
A fabulously awful cricket game that was probably solely responsible for giving Virgin, in the old days, the worst reputation of all games companies – a reputation they had to fight very hard to live down. *'Owzat* had vile white on green graphics and – oh joy! – requested the user to 'EDIT line 100' if he wanted to change his team. 'Ooops! That one must have slipped through the net...' was the immortal message from Virgin's PR man at the time.

● *Alice in Videoland*
BugByte (C64)
A re-release of Audiogenic's disk-based *Alice in Wonderland* on BugByte's tape-based budget label. Rather unfortunately, following the first graphically exquisite scene, the player was requested to insert the second disc... Play was thus shortlived, and mainly consisted of trying to throw a useless cassette tape in a bin.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

The fact that there's plenty to do makes F15 II one of the most exciting simulations around...on screen presentation is brilliant...the graphics are utterly superb...it's certainly the most realistic 3D effect yet seen on a flight simulation.

C&VG 93%



Flight sim fans know who does it best - and F15 II is our best yet !

At MicroProse we're pleased that our flight simulations are acclaimed as the best technical products around. We're proud of F-19 Stealth Fighter, Gunship and Knights of the Sky, for they accurately recreate every aspect of real life piloting, from the highs to the lows.

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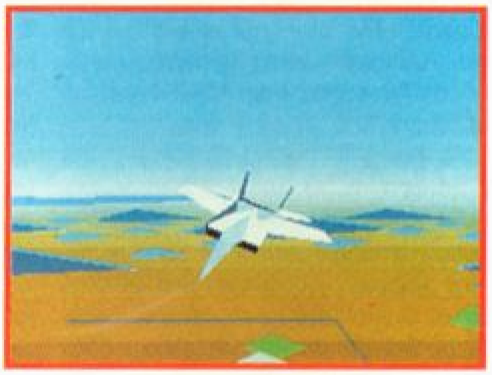
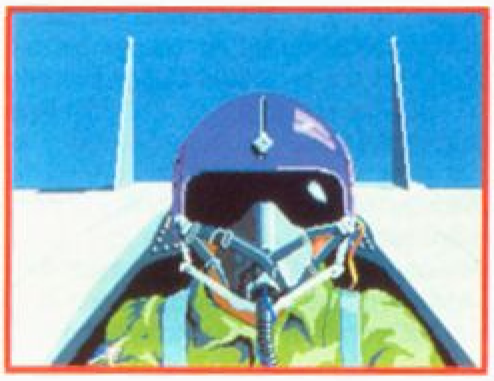
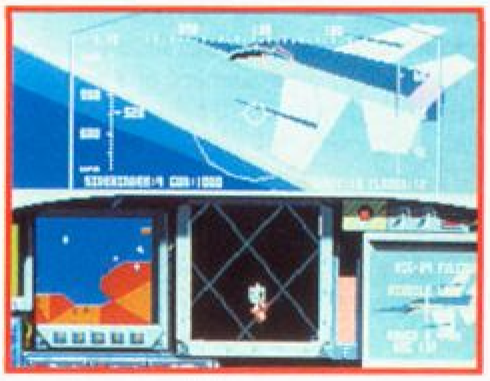
F-15 Strike Eagle II is already available for IBM PC's and compatibles, and is coming soon for Commodore Amiga and Atari ST

IBM SCREENSHOTS SHOWN







F-15
STRIKE EAGLE
II

LAWKS-A-LORDY!THIS MONTH THERE ARE MORE UPDATES ON MORE MACHINES THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT! READ ON...

UPDATES

ATARI ST

POWERMONGER

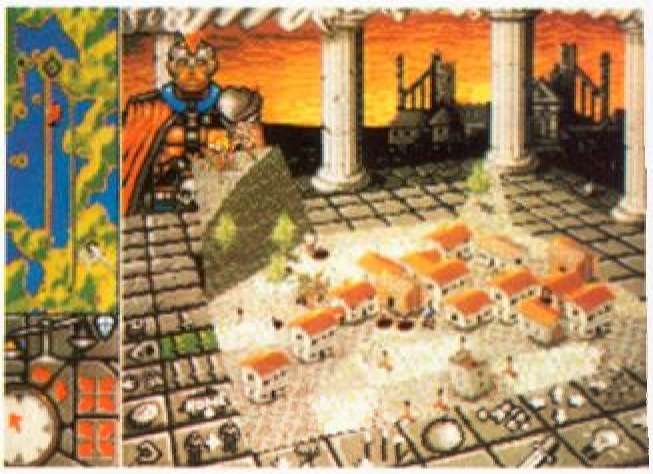
Electronic Arts £29.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 39;
ACE RATING: 973

At last it's here! Lead 20 men across 195 lands, conquering and pillaging as you go. All control is by a clutch of icons. But be warned - a simple interface method conceals a game of huge strategic depth. For once the hype is completely justified.

Graphically identical to the Amiga version, Bullfrog have also done a fine job on the sound. The samples may be a little fuzzier but they're as good as could be expected - which is just as well considering the pretty important role sound effects play in the game as audii clues as to what's going on.

Gameplay, of course, is also identical - why mend it if it ain't broke? There aren't enough superlatives in the dictionary to do this game justice. Just go and buy it, will you?

ATARI ST RATING: 973



***Powermonger* on the Atari ST. In-depth strategy for the masses.**

IBM PC

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Domark/Broderbund £24.99;
Amiga version reviewed Issue 40;
ACE RATING: 915

No complaints here; this is as good a version as you could hope to see. While the background graphics of *Prince of Persia* aren't astonishing even on the Amiga, consisting mainly of dungeon walls and platforms, the animation of the main character is superb, and fortunately this doesn't change for the PC.

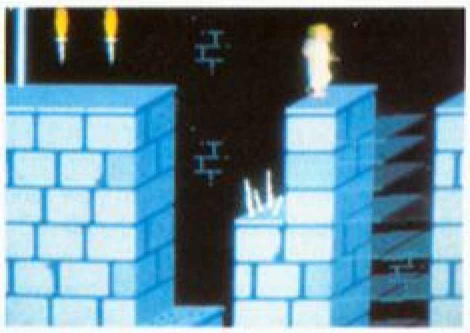
The plot is, admittedly, completely unremarkable; the Prince has to fight his way through the evil Vizier's dungeons in sixty minutes, otherwise the captive princess will fall into the baddie's clutches. But rather than the usual selection of slavering demons and goblins to fight, the Prince's challenge consists more of working out the strategies necessary to negotiate crumbling platforms, avoid mantraps and outwit sword-wielding guards (though there is plenty of sword-fighting too!).

That being the case, the PC's graphics hold up perfectly well, and the sampled sound effects (portcullises opening, buttons clicking) give you useful clues to solving the problems. The music is also good, featuring several different themes and enough variation to keep you interested even if you are just using the internal beeper.

Supplied on a single 3.5" or 5.25" disk, the game can be transferred to hard disk, and all graphics modes are supported. There are keyboard and joystick control options and a save game feature. Programmed by Broderbund in France, *Prince of Persia* is a triumph of animation techniques and game design, and should not be missed.

IBM PC RATING: 905

***Prince of Persia* on the IBM PC. Look out! Beware the Silvery Spikes of Doom!**



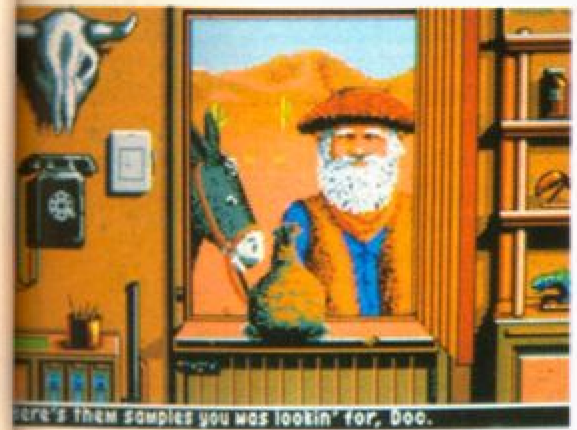
IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Mirrorsoft/Cinemaware £24.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 28;
ACE RATING: 895

This epic graphic adventure/arcade game draws heavily on 50's sci-fi films like *Them* and *Tarantula* for its plot. The graphics, though, are anything but the grainy black-and-white of such low-budget gems; there's no CGA mode, but in VGA or EGA you'll enjoy the colourful animated backdrops. The graphics of the PC version doesn't quite measure up to the sophistication of the Amiga's, but the colourful detailed backgrounds and animated characters are the main joys of the game, and on the whole transfer pretty well to the PC.

The same cannot be said for the music. If you haven't fitted a Roland, AdLib or Soundblaster card, don't make the mistake of switching on the internal sound - the repetitive tunes, which seem to consist of the same four notes over and over again, will soon drive you buggy.

Taking the role of a geologist investigating strange happenings in the small town of Lizard Breath, you choose actions from scrolling multiple-choice menus, and find yourself thrown into arcade sequences such as ' Extinguish the Fire', 'Shoot the Giant Ant' and 'Knife Fight'. Most of these games



ere's them samples you was lookin' for, Doc.

***It Came From The Desert* on the IBM PC. This hairy ol' critter is a pain in the ass.**

▼ IT CAME FROM THE DESSERT continued

take the form of a view of the background and your target, together with your hand clutching a gun, knife or fire extinguisher in the foreground. The action isn't particularly fast or frantic on the PC version, but the element of skill is still pretty high.

More challenging are the strategy-based sections, where you use the scrolling town plan and overhead views to marshal your forces against the attack of the giant ants, and odd diversions like a game of motorised chicken with the local tearaways.

Supplied on four 3.5" disks, *ICFTD* requires a great deal of disk-swapping unless you transfer the whole lot to hard drive. There's a game save routine which is accessed through the map screen, and options for joystick or keyboard controls, which allow you to move diagonally by pressing two keys together.

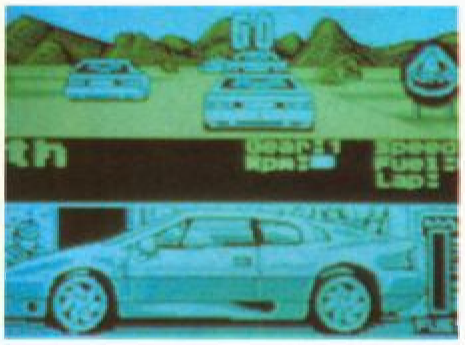
Though the Cinemaware format, used in *Rocket Ranger, Three Stooges, Sinbad* and several others, is now becoming a little tired, *ICFTD* is one of the best of its type and the PC version is no disappointment.

IBM PC RATING: 840

AMSTRAD CPC

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £10.99cs/£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 38;
ACE RATING 875



For some reason the Amstrad version fails to give the same impression of speed as the Spectrum; the roadway twists and dips nicely, but even at top speed you don't feel a sense of exhilaration - perhaps because collision with another car or an obstacle doesn't damage you, it just slows you down, as in the other versions.

Though the graphics are nicely designed, use of colour is pretty limited too, so despite good in-game music the whole doesn't add up to much more than any other road-racing game.

AMSTRAD RATING: 670

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge **on the Amstrad CPC. Better graphics, but they're far slower than the Speccy's.**

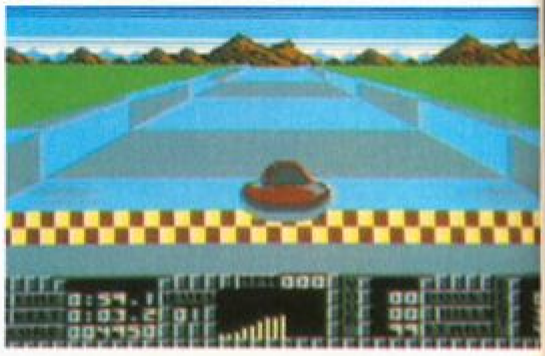
C64

S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Domark/Tengen £9.99cs/£14.99dk;
Amiga version reviewed Issue 41;
ACE RATING: 480

Better sound and more colourful graphics than the Spectrum, which more accurately resemble the colourful filled-polygon tunnel backgrounds of the Amiga version, inevitably put the C64 version ahead of the Spectrum; but again the low speed of the program makes it pretty to look at but numbingly boring to play. Compared to the16-bit versions, not to mention the impressive coin-op original, *S.T.U.N. Runner* on the C64 is a waste of disk space.

C64 RATING: 410



S.T.U.N. Runner **on the C64. More colour, but still: oh dear, oh dear, oh dear...**

SPECTRUM

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £10.99cs/£14.99dk;
Amiga version reviewed Issue 38;
ACE RATING: 875

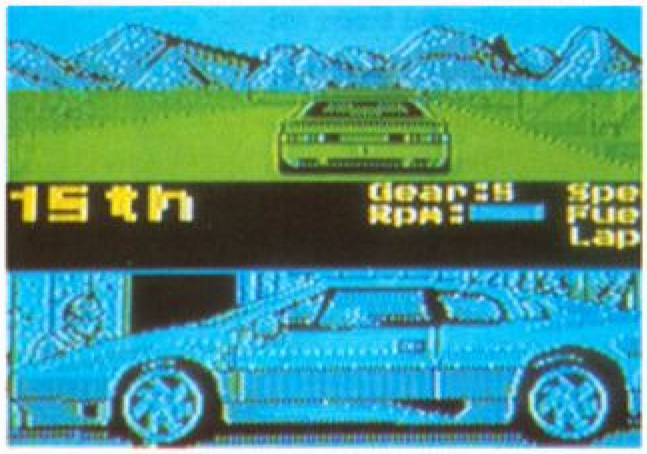
Officially licensed by Lotus, this racing simulation doesn't offer a great deal not seen in dozens of other cockpit-view racing games, except for the two-player split-screen view - and even this brings back memories of the classic *Pitstop II*.

While the Amiga version features 32 tracks, the 8-bit versions have only 9; you still have a field of 20 others to beat, with Easy, Medium, Difficult and Practice modes, featuring different numbers of races which have to be completed, and a choice of three in-game tunes. The Spectrum versions of these are pretty good, and the sound effects acceptable. You also have the choice of manual or automatic gears and two forms of joystick controls.

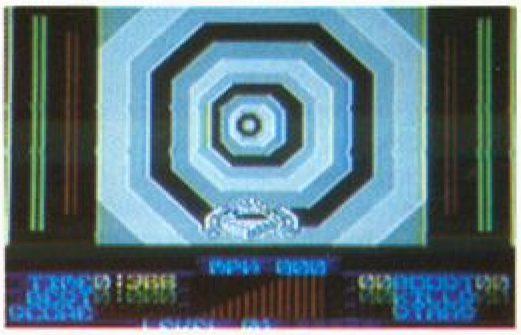
In one-player mode the lower half of the screen is taken up with a nice illustration of your car. While you're racing, although the nicely-designed graphics are understandably mainly monochrome, the animation is fast; the road twists and dips convincingly, and even when you are in two-player mode and there are several other cars on the screen, you get a decent impression of speed.

A fair game, but not an original enough basic idea to compete successfully with the dozens of other road racing games for the Spectrum.

SPECTRUM RATING: 789



Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge **on the Spectrum. The trade off between colour and speed makes this version more enjoyable than the CPC incarnation.**



S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Domark/Tengen £9.99cs/£14.99dk;
Amiga version reviewed Issue 41;
ACE RATING: 480

With a rating of 480 for the Amiga version, you'd be right to expect very little from the 8-bit versions of *S.T.U.N. Runner*. In the Amiga version, though the speed of the filled-polygon animation is low, at least it looks pretty; in the Spectrum version, the colourful tunnels through which you race your space-motorbike are replaced by spider-webs, roadways and tunnels which are plain in design, lacking in colour and devoid of real animation.

Since the action consists solely of steering your bike around the walls of the tunnels, following the trail of stars to achieve the highest speed and aiming for boost pads, some nicely-designed enemies would not go amiss; but the alien ships here are poor little sprites which you're almost ashamed to blast.

Sound is poor, and the between-screen map displays add nothing to the action. On the whole it's hard to find anything to recommend in this effort, unless you're looking for a birthday present for someone you really dislike.

SPECTRUM RATING: 350

S.T.U.N. Runner **on the Spectrum. Monochrome graphics and angular tunnels lose the look of the coin-op, while the lack of speed loses the speed.**

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The Commodore A500 Batman Pack must surely rank as one of the most popular computer packs ever! The pack features the **Commodore Amiga 500 computer** with **mouse controller** and **TV modulator**, plus four top software titles. The software includes: '**Batman The Movie**' - Rid Gotham City of the cunning joker, in Ocean's top selling title based on the blockbuster Batman film; **New Zealand Story** - high quality conversion of the leading arcade game; **Interceptor** - Dogfight with two F-16's in this leading flight simulator; **Deluxe Paint II** - top quality Amiga graphics package which set the standard for others to follow. Return the coupon for further details.

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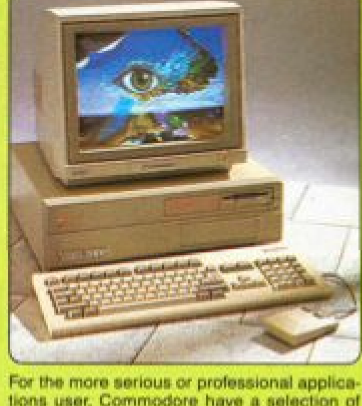
AMIGA 2000



For the more serious or professional applications user, Commodore have a selection of systems based around the expandable Amiga 2000, at prices from £1295+VAT. The A2000 features a full 1Mb RAM (expandable to 9Mb), 9 system expansion slots, plus IBM compatibility with the use of PC-XT or PC-AT bridgeboards. Complete and return the coupon, putting a tick in the A2000 box, for details of A2000 computer systems.

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Slip on your magic shoes, practise throwing a rainbow and you're ready to go island hopping. From the island of Doh to Monster Island, you will encounter Doh himself, stinging insects, lethal combat machines, mechanical assailants, the formidable beings of legend and folklore. Finally enter the world of darkness and its inhabitants.

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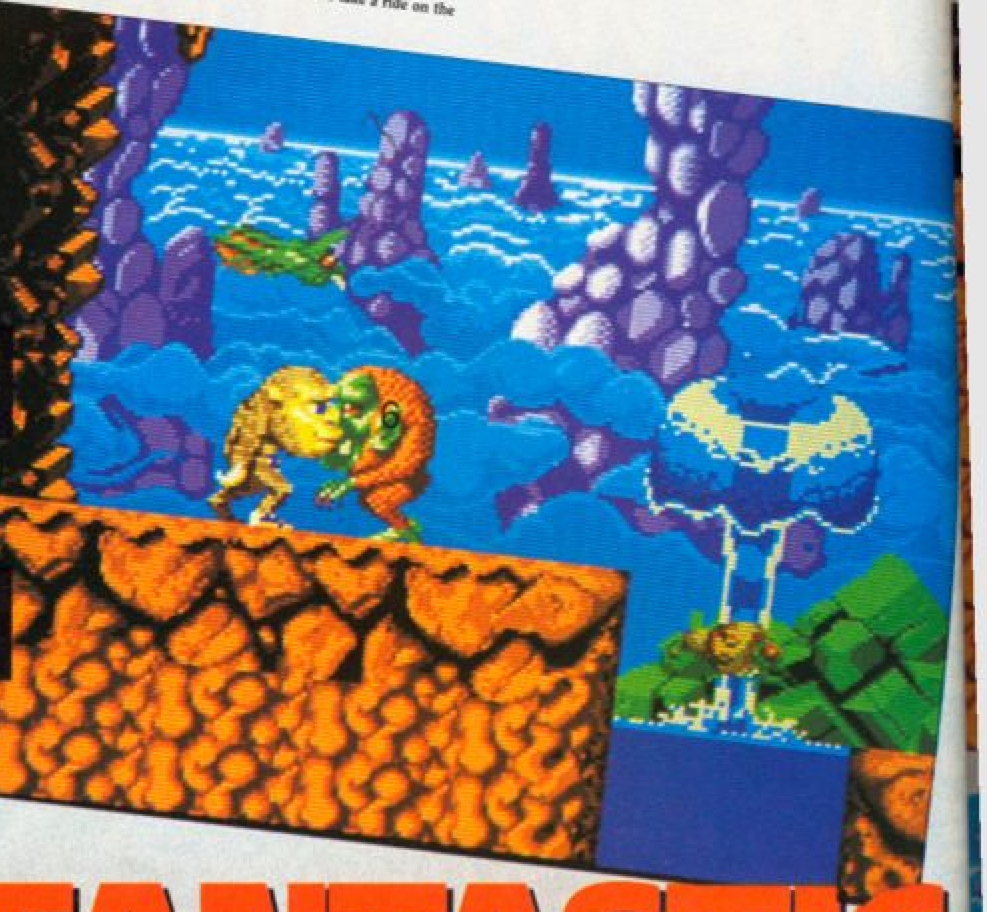
Out of the caves at last. Dodge more baddies and take a ride on the water spout!



ACE COMPETITION

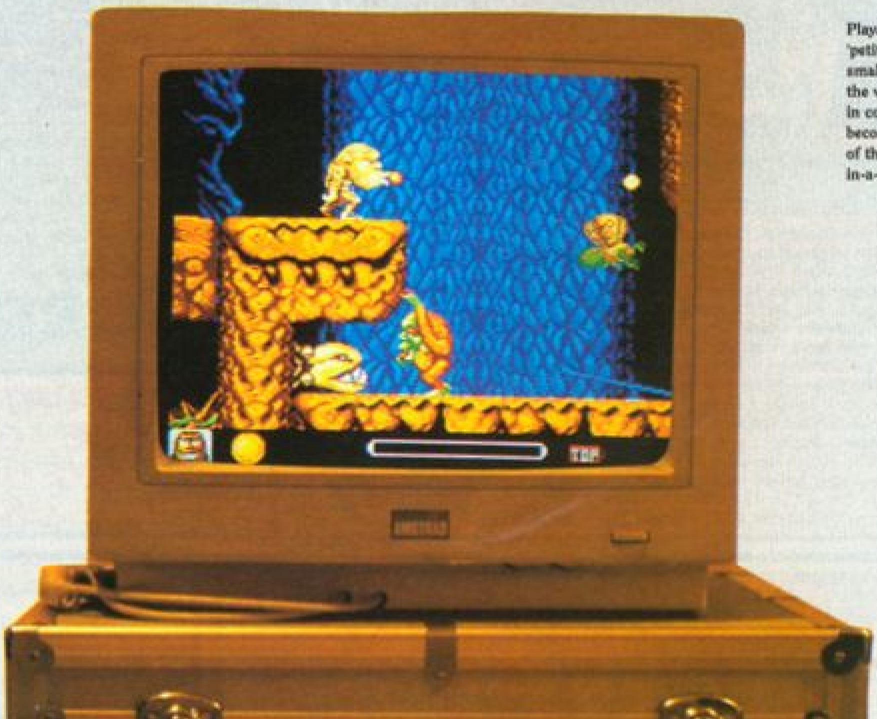
WIN A FANTASTIC TOKI COIN-OP...

Toki, brave and muscular hero of a colourful and magical world, has been turned into a super-cute monkey by an evil wizard. As if that wasn't bad enough, the evil mage has spirited away Toki's girlfriend to his mountain-top castle. Toki must use his newly-acquired primate powers to the full if he is to scale level-upon-level of multidirectional scrolling mayhem.

Climbing vines, scaling rock-faces and avoiding traps - it's a dangerous life being a monkey, especially when every creature in the jungle is out to get you. The meanies fly into you, fall onto you, drop things on you and fire things at you. And all the time you're having to climb up, up, up!!

Toki is one of those infuriatingly addictive games which mixes all-out arcade action with simple puzzles and fantastic graphics.

It has to be the dream of every arcade fanatic to have a coin-op in their own home. Imagine: constant freeplay and the envy of all your mates! Well, now your dreams can come true! Along with Ocean, ACE is offering you lucky readers the chance to win the super *Toki* coin-op, all crammed into a handy, portable camera case!



Playable, portable and 'petite' (that's cutely small to you). Becom the winner of our phon in contest and you'll become the proud owne of this fabulous 'coin-op-in-a-case'.

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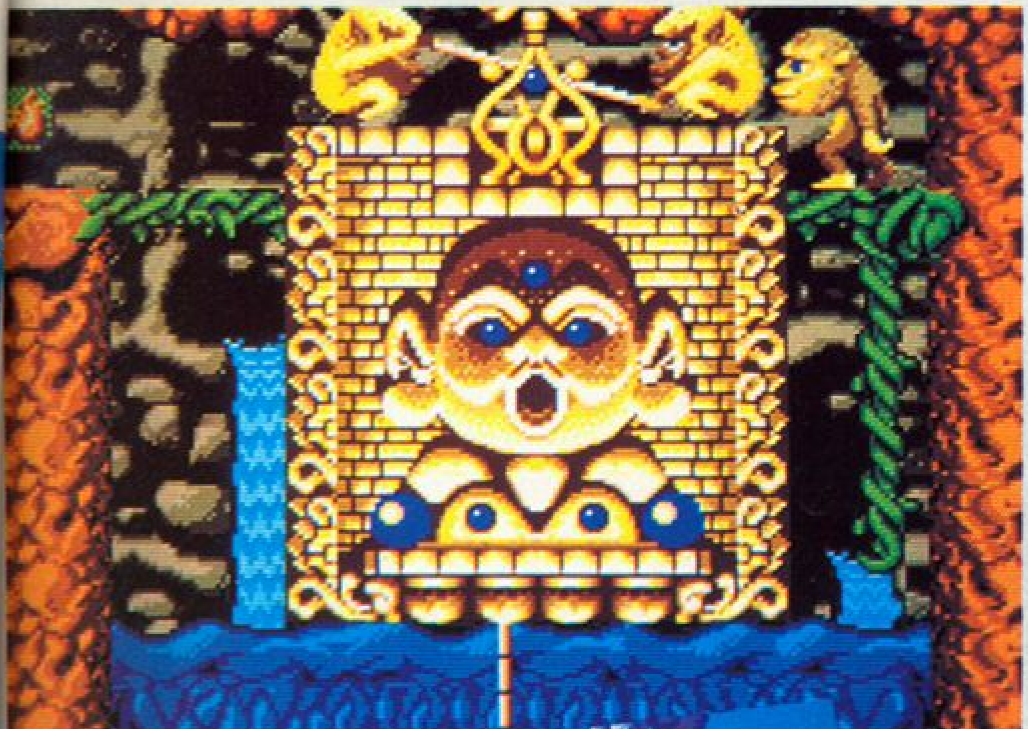
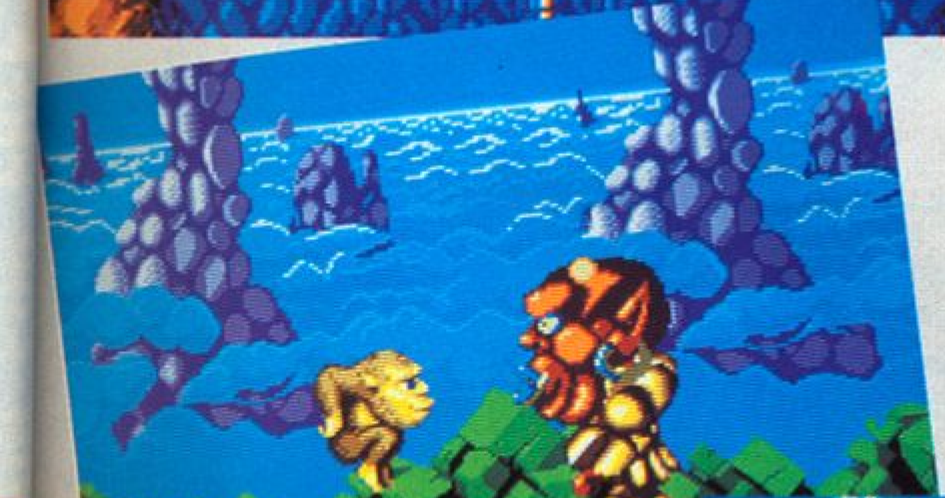
hese are the sort of big 'n' bold baddies you can expect to meet. Don't say you weren't warned!



PRIZES GALORE!

The first prize winner will receive the *Toki* coin-op, an Ocean baseball cap and a copy of the game for their cómputer.

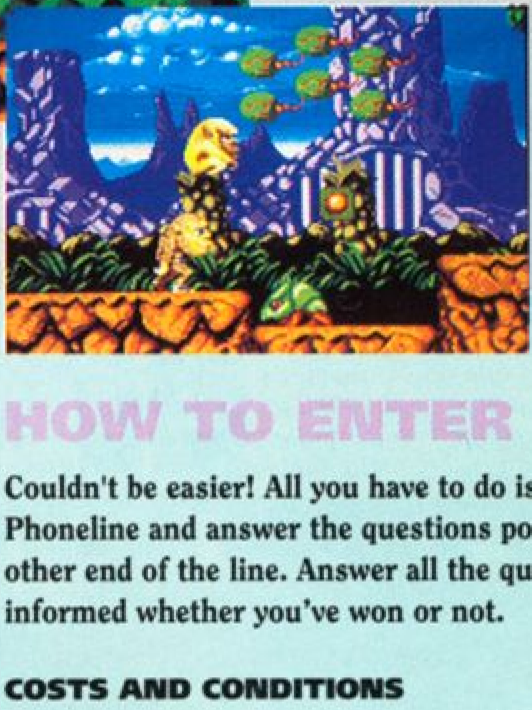
Twenty runners up will receive baseball hats and copies of the game for their computer.



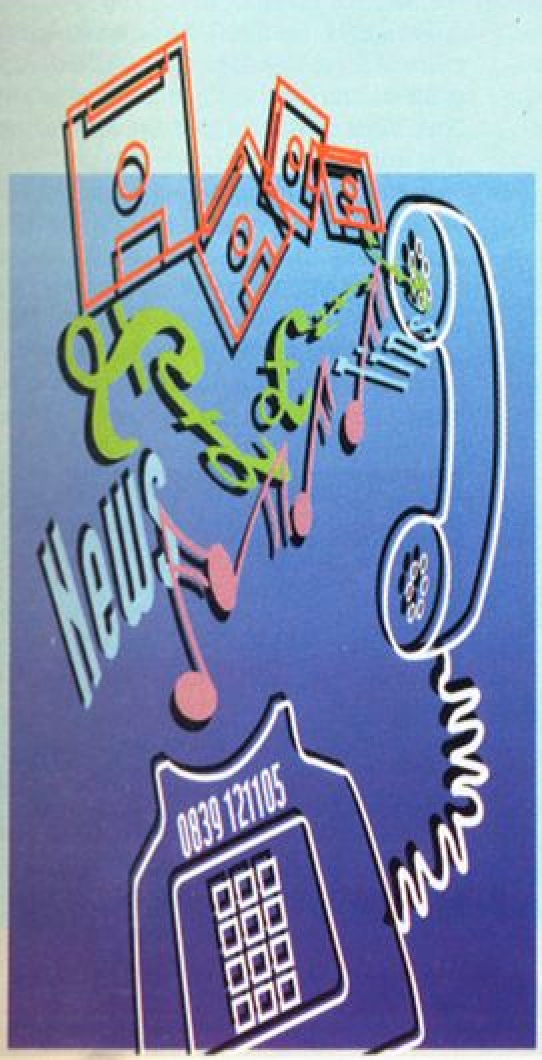
The giant gargoyle at the end of Level 1. He's bad enough, but even deadlier are the hordes of bouncing baboons he can summon with a wave of his hand.

TAKING A LOOK AT TOKI

The screenshots on these pages were taken from the Amiga conversion of *Toki*, which is being programmed by Ocean's French division who recently converted *Pang* so successfully. So far, it's looking excellent. The fast parallax scrolling graphics are big, well-detailed and very colourful. Sound, too, is excellent, with a jolly tune to spur you on to greater efforts. The version we saw still had a fair bit of work to be done on it, but so far it's looking like it'll be a near identical home version of the coin-op. More news soon!



No rest for the hairy. Flying squids and icky insects are just some of the foes you'll need to flatten.



HOW TO ENTER

Couldn't be easier! All you have to do is dial the ACE Interactive Phoneline and answer the questions posed by the mystery man at the other end of the line. Answer all the questions correctly and you'll be informed whether you've won or not.

COSTS AND CONDITIONS

Calls cost 33p per minute cheap rate and 44p at other times. No employees of EMAP Plc or Ocean Software Ltd are eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry to this contest signifies understanding and acceptance of these rules.

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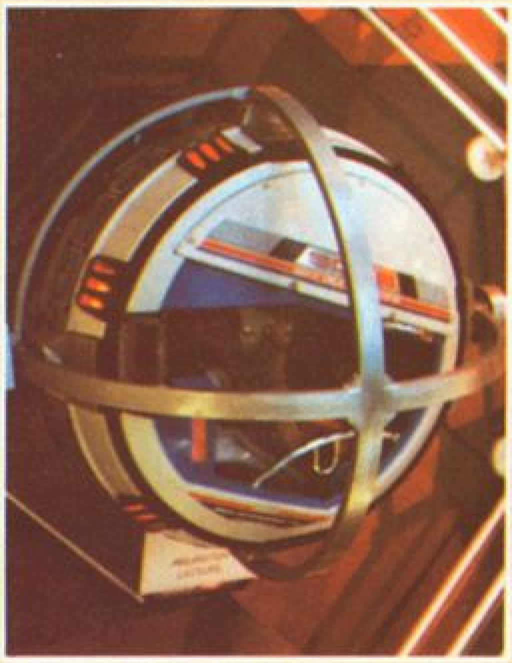


The R360 in sideview. It's real Rock 'n' roll, folks!

R360?

No thanks - I just ATE!

The Amusement Trade Exhibition forms a keynote for the whole of the European Coin-Op year - John Cook was there to make the most of the freeplay

Golly. Arcades are getting almost respectable. This year, the ATE was gra by the presence of Peter Lloyd MP, Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, who opened the proceedings of arguably Europe's most prestigious arcade event, with a whoppi 210 exhibitors.

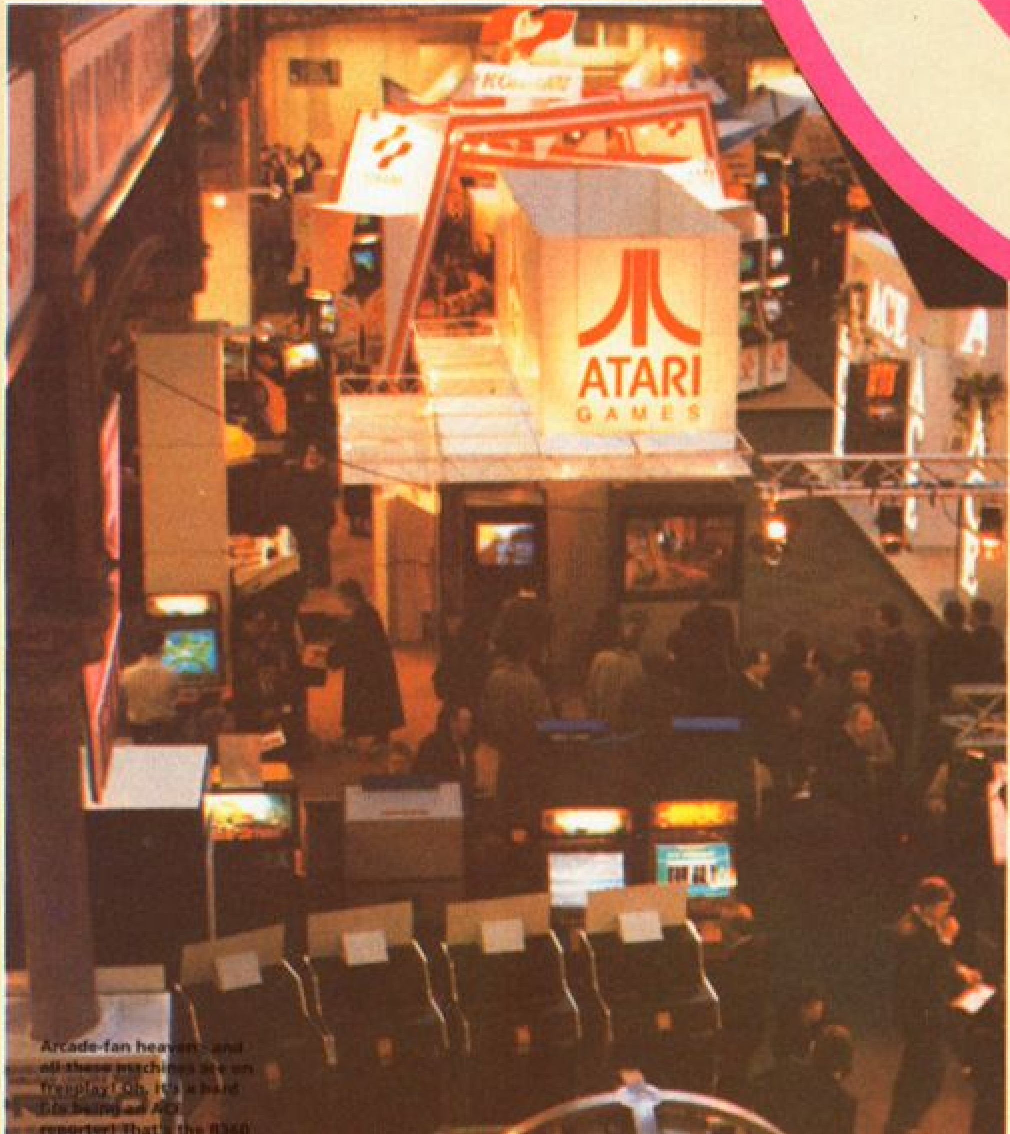
The money that accrues to the Treasury as a result of the AWP trade is enough to warrant th wheeling out of a junior Minister on occasions like this, just to keep the trade happy - althoug whether the House of Commons will ever ope an Arcade Annex (presumably just off from the Tea Room) is open to debate.

Whatever, Mr Lloyd's eye might have stoppe on the R360, which looked as if it could prove useful tool for disciplining the more independe minded backbenchers. Strap 'em in, start the game and before you can say, "Did I just throw up, or is that last night's pizza on my trousers," they'll be jumping through the lobbies on a thre line whip, no worries.

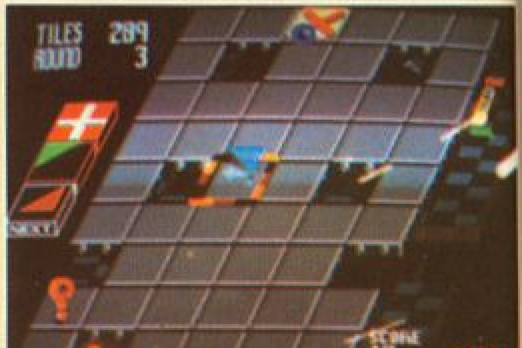
That's right, the R360, the most talked about piece of arcade equipment in dry-cleaning circ made its Western Hemispherical debut here an boy! - did it go down a treat. Up, down, left, righ - the works, and impressively fast too.

It's undoubtedly the most significant piece of arcade equipment to appear for a number of years, if only to empasise to the home market that instant hit coin-op licences are now a thing the past.

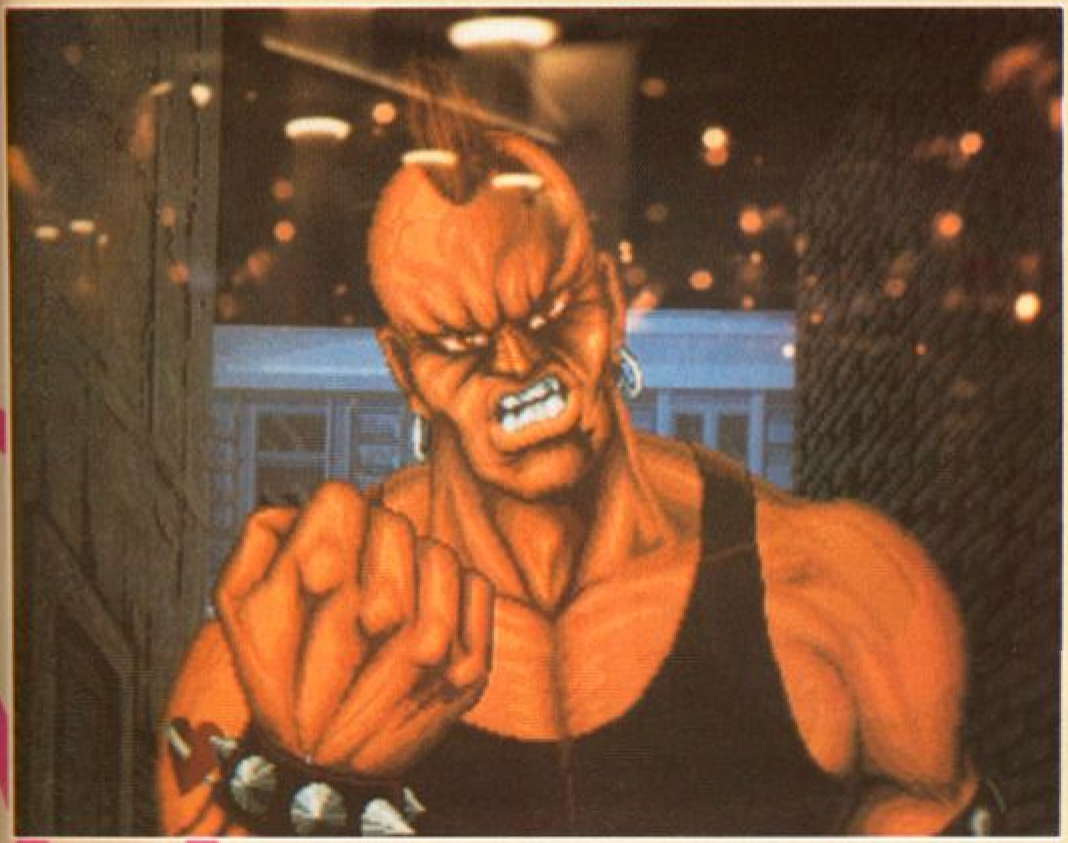
It doesn't matter who licences any game that specially written for the R360 (*G-Loc* is running on it at the moment) - putting it on home format



Arcade-fan heaven - and all these machines are on freeplay! Oh, it's a hard life being an ACE reporter! That's the R360 in the foreground.



The bizarre new puzzle game from Sega: *Borench* or just *Boring*? You, the penny-paying jury, decide!



Reckon yer 'ard? Try taking on Taito's *Sonic Blast Man* and see who comes out top.

"Wouldn't three-screen two-player Race Drivin' be a good idea?" ponders John Cook. "Your wish is our command, oh master!" booms Atari!

is going to be next to useless because (a) you probably couldn't do a very good version and (b) you wouldn't get any of the motion effects.

Several years ago, coin-op licences were priceless because home computers had virtually the same technical capability of the hardware in the coin-op. You could do a near perfect version for home format - great stuff!

Then, in following years, licences were useful because the coin-op manufacturers were coming up with most of the good ideas - *Operation Wolf*, for example.

With the present climate, in an arcade industry that is paranoid about the incursion of the home market into its income, there seems to be little innovation (*cf* the sequelmania at AMOA this year) and a ghoulish interest in profit margins. It's just not worth spending the big money on what's out there right now on PCB.

What are making headway are the games that are trying to maximise the use of the unique aspects of arcade play - multi-player capability, real motion effects, hard-wired routines. The success of the R360 is that it can deliver what a home system can't - upside down gameplay! Try licensing that!

Of course there will always be a place for the odd coin-op licence, but it's domination on home format has gone forever - but rather than being replaced by quality original product, it appears that by and large the money is now being spent on film and TV licence tie-ins. Will they ever learn, eh?

There were plenty of new coin-ops on display - but there was also a fair amount of totally silly stuff that can make this business great, from time to time. For example, *Crazy* Golf, with plastic turf that reforms to a new configuration on each hole and inflatable bouncy things in all shapes and sizes. You tell 'em what you want, and they'll make it. Yes, really - anything!

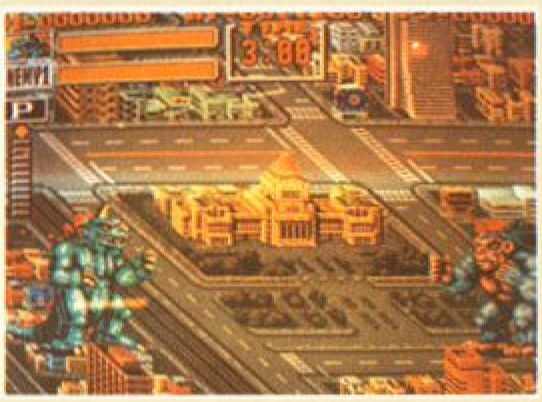
But my favourite was computer palmistry. Put your hand on this scanner and 10 seconds later, there are your innermost secrets being hammered out on a dot-matrix printer. Apparently, I have a very pronounced Mound of Venus...

The latest SWP innovation is one you're not going to believe - so sit down and get yourself a glass of water before the read the next sentence. After playing *Tetris* for money and *Loopz* for money, now you can play... *Space Invaders* for money! Obviously the coin-op business has come under the influence of the Green movement at last - with (presumably) recycled Orics being used to run the software on this one.

Feeling frustrated? Then try *Sonic Blast Man* from Taito. Protect your hands using the boxing gloves supplied with the cabinet, read the disclaimer (if you break your hands, we break our hearts, but not our bank) then hit the unit as hard as you can. Depending on your cumulative performance over three hits, you either knock the teeth out of this hard-looking b*stard and get the girlie, or get a free Bullworker. Well, something like that, anyway.

OK - so much for the novelties, but what was new otherwise? Quite a bit, as it happens, with more new releases on show than were at the recent New Orleans AMOA.

Jaleco must be pleased with the reception for *'Cisco Heat* - best driving game of the moment - but the new one they were pushing this time was a futuristic four-player motorbike/combat game called *Cycle Warriors*. With distinctive and stylish graphics, it's an eye catching unit that is bound to appeal to the younger player.



Giant Gekkos and awesome apes abound in SNK's *King of the Monsters*.

Likewise *Rad Mobile*; another superb demonstration that Sega's got the best software engineers in the world, if not the best game designers. It's a 20-level driving game that has you cruising across continental USA which is high on visuals and low on gameplay. One day, Sega will come up with somet hing worthy of its excellent sprite-manipulation techniques - until then, sit in the unit and marvel how they do what they do.

An interesting PCB game from Sega was called *Borench*. It's an isometric-view arcade puzzle game. Initially seeming a bit dull, continued play suggested it might have some hidden depths - we'll give you the definitive view next month.

Atari. What can you say about Atari that hasn't been said before? Sometimes they seem completely barmy - however, occasionally you pick up a flyer on something and just hope it inspires the public consciousness.

You could almost see the crossed fingers on its stand, where the new game *Ramparts* was on show. *Go* meets *Missile Command* meets *Tetris*. It's *that* strange. Again, continued play suggested there was more to it than the initially met the eye. You'll either be intrigued by it, or feel moved to send Atari a "Get Well" card.

However, the firm has been clever enough to grab the rights to a video disc game, *Mad Dog McCree*. Shoot at the screen with an electronic six-gun - but with added good storyline and a rudimentary adventure structure. It's good, very good. Play it if you can.

Meanwhile, there was a three-screen deluxe version of the *Race Drivin'* machine, plus one that you can link up to another unit, racing in true one-on-one style and thus fixing my major gripe about the game as exhibited a couple of issues ago. Thanks, guys!

Two great sporting games showed up, one from Williams, high on the success of *Smash TV*, and another from Konami, looking for something to supplement the phenomena of *Turtles*.

The Williams game is called *High Impact*. Based on American Football it can be played by one to four people. Simply the best, this is one game that's going to be snapped up by the home software companies. Then there's Konami's *Golfing Greats*. At last Konami have found a good use for its sprite technology in this wonderful PCB game. Impressive effects, great playability - if golf games are your thing, start saving up!

Finally, software support for the Neo Geo continues to get better and better; *King of the Monsters* being outstanding both creatively and technically. And good news for all you *Street Fighters*: now you can do it all again, only more so, thanks to Capcom.

That was ATE - some in-depth examination of these and other new releases next month, including possibly the best pinball table ever.

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MIRACLE
LEARNING THE P

The Nintendo Entertainment System tries to offload its 'pointless video games' image with the advent of peripherals such as the Miracle keyboard. To decide which console you should go for, check out pages 87 to 89.

82 ACE Charts

If you want to add top quality software to your collection, check out the ACE Charts every month – they're the only listings in the country that tell you which games are getting the highest review marks in ALL UK magazines. If it's number one here, it should be number one on your list. And you can also win free software by predicting next month's entries.

103 Hot off the Shelf

This issue of ACE tells you what's hot NOW – but what about those other titles still sitting on the shelves? Our software buyers' guide pinpoints the games we've tipped for the top in the last few months and which should still be available.

87 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Our definitive tech listings and buyer's guide. This month: consoles.

91 Direct Line

...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

119 ACE Crossword

The infamous ACE Crossward – crack it and win a prize.

113 Adventureline

Pat Winstanley with her regular section for dedicated adventurers.

109 The ACE Diary

Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

111 ACE Deals

ACE rounds up some of the latest freebies you can get at your local dealer...If you go down to the shops today, be sure you check this column out first.

120 Encyclopaedia Micromannica!

If you've missed a vital issue, check here...

85 PD Update

Mark Smiddy with another selection of cheap software

112 ACE Readers Pages

Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.

101 Bookmarks

There's a whole month to wait until the next ACE issue, so why not pick up a book in the meantime? Sandra Vogel turns the pages of the latest titles.

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RED HOT!

ACE has brought you over 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, which broke the news of the CDTV in the UK – then check out page 120

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH – as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DID YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

ACE readers are developing chart prediction into a fine art. Every top game was spotted by at least one reader and one – *Powermonger* on the Amiga – was tipped by almost everybody. First off, **Pete Earnshaw** of Rotherham managed to pull *Wheels of Fire* out of the hat for the CPC. **Andrew Watson** of Edinburgh was one of the very few who managed to guess *Golden Axe* for the C64. A lot of people came up trumps with *Speedball 2* for the ST, but **Eric de Loos** from the Netherlands was first out of the hat. **John Shearing** of Godstone was first past the post with *Powermonger* for the Amiga. **Luke Smith** of Birmingham hit gold with *R-Type* for the Spectrum.. **Riccardo del Greco** of Saltcoats took to the skies with *Wing Commander* on the PC. And finally, a special mention to Phil Maxfield, who got every game right but missed the draw every time. Tough luck Phil – but at that rate you're going to be winning as often as not.

What you can win...
You'll get a mystery game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH's top chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC chart printed over the page. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's Index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, Psygnosis's current titles are worth 6.83 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software index: 75.12
Down slightly, but over 3.5 marks up on the figure for this time last year.

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX
Origin	98.25	n/a	23.13
Micro Style	90	+3.52	14.88
Audiogenic	89	+8.67	13.88
Gremlin	86.96	+1.69	11.84
Novagen	84.75	n/a	9.63
System 3	84.67	+5.67	9.55
Core Design	82	+4.42	6.88
Psygnosis	81.95	+5.77	6.83
Dinamic	81.67	n/a	6.55
ARC	81.6	+10.64	6.48
Ocean	81.29	+4.91	6.17
Electronic Arts	80.89	-2.64	5.77
Microprose	80.88	-0.93	5.76
Activision	80.75	-1.23	5.63
Players Premier	78.8	+15.23	3.68
Empire	78.56	-5.02	3.44
Mastertronic	77.84	+13.34	2.72
Virgin	77	-5.28	1.88
Rainbow Arts	76.44	-5.09	1.32
Millennium	76	-0.61	0.88
US Gold	75.06	-1.37	-0.06
Action 16	74.6	-7.4	-0.52
Accolade	74.07	-1.68	-1.05
Electronic Zoo	73.76	+10.05	-1.36
Digital Integration	73.7	-0.47	-1.42

AMIGA

Prince of Persia	Domark	91
Battle Command	Ocean	89.9
Powermonger	Electronic Arts	88.2
Masterblaster	Rainbow Arts	88.2
NARC	Ocean	87.7

Powermonger is firmly dethroned by two brand new titles: *Prince of Persia* has been highly rated for its graphics and animation.

C64

Rick Dangerous 2	Micro Style	89.4
California Games	Kixx	87.2
Amazing Spiderman	Empire	86.2
Nightshift	US Gold	84.5
Platinum	US Gold	81.5

Last month we said *Rick Dangerous* deserved the top slot in the C64 chart – this month the reviewers agreed. Budget offering California Games shows the old can still hold their own against the new.

AMSTRAD CPC

Shadow of the Beast	Gremlin	85.84
Target Renegade	Hit Squad	83
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles	Image Works	82
Ivan 'Ironman' Stewart	Virgin	77.3
Motorcycle 500	Cult	59

The *Turtles* have made it into the top five, but Gremlin's version of the 16-bit *Shadow* is a clear winner on points. *Ivan Ironman Stewart* continues a long run in the charts and there's a big gap between it and *M500*.

IBM PC

Wing Commander	Origin	96.5
Wonderland	Magnetic Scrolls	94
Knights of the Sky	Microprose	89.5
Interphase	Image Works	85.5
It Came From the Desert	Cinemaware	85
Covert Action	Microprose	85

Wing Commander improves its rating and *Wonderland* reappears at number two.

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN

First, of course, you've got the game. Then th software house and – in the last column – th average score (converted to a percentage wi typical ACE precision to two decimal places) th game received in ALL reviews during the la month. Don't forget that the review ratings a taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so w don't necessarily agree with some of the judg ments here, but all review ratings are, to a certa extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
OPPOSITE

91
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87.75

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87.25
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81.5

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59

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HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
'The top softco will be...(name of company)'

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize, then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for – it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. REMEMBER – YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT **ONE** JACKPOT CATEGORY!

STEP SIX

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (31st February). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The first correct forecast for each category taken out of the hat wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize.

THIS IS ROUND 16

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identify entries. You MUST include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by February 31st 1990.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

ATARI ST

Speedball 2	**Image Works**	92.99
Lotus Turbo Esprit	**Gremlin**	89.75
Ninja Remix	**System 3**	86.33
Toyota GT Rally	**Gremlin**	83.5
Golden Axe	**Virgin**	82.5

***Speedball 2* retains the number one position despite a fine rally by Gremlin's fleet. System 3 prove that there's still a warm reception ready for kick'n'punch scenarios.**

SPECTRUM

R-Type	**Hit Squad**	90.25
Lotus Turbo Esprit	**Gremlin**	89.25
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles	**Image Works**	87.25
Target Renegade	**Hit Squad**	85.25
Super Cars	**Gremlin**	83.75

***R-Type* continues to hold sway, as the *Turtles* lose ground and Gremlin motors in with two racing games, showing here and in the CPC charts a resolute 8-bit presence.**

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Branded

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5.25" DSDD	(each) 0.75

FREEBIES

ACE roving reporter MARK SMIDDY returns from another voyage of discovery and debate into Shareware land...

This month has seen an interesting, some would say inevitable turnaround from the commercial software scene. Not only have some houses recognised the existence of PD games, they have gone as far as banning two altogether because they feel their intellectual (design) copyright has been infringed. According to one source, the first threatened with the might of copyright lawyers were the numerous *Tetris* "clones" appearing almost daily.

More recently, distributors of *Pipe Mania*-inspired Plumb Crazy were "asked" to remove the game from their shelves. An inside source commented: "They were very polite about it. They just said they were planning to give *Pipe Mania* a budget release and felt *Plumb Crazy* might jeopardise sales." So the message to all PD libraries carrying *Plumb Crazy* is, stop now and destroy all copies.

In my opinion this seems a shame – both games have their strengths. But this brings the whole ugly question of intellectual copyright to the fore. If the whole world had been really pedantic, arcade games would probably have stopped at *Pong*. Also, if IBM had adopted a similar attitude, the PC would probably have died out long ago. But enough of that – on with the show.

DYNAMITE DICK

Amiga £2.50 - Joystick

With four-directional scrolling and a character furiously burying his way for hidden treasure, the uninitiated could be foxed into thinking this is just a *Boulderdash* clone. Nothing like it folks. It bears passing resemblance to the overplayed *Repton* series on the BBC and Electron - remember those? But for once this seems largely like a game in its own right.

Dick is a miner, a subterranean explorer or, as some would have it, a one-man demolition team. In pursuit of happiness and a Skoda GTI, Dick has decided to do a bit of prospecting. Anyone in their right mind would just blag their local gold mine or perhaps rob Fort Knox. Dick is a man who enjoys challenge – armed guards and security cameras are not his scene – he prefers to do battle with vampire bats, runaway railcarts and homicidal moles.

So, armed with only a battery-powered miner's helmet (and a few sticks of trinitrotoluene for good measure) he enters an abandoned smuggler's cave ready to make his fortune. Viewed from overhead, you take on the task of guiding Dick through the mine, collecting as much gold as possible, blowing the odd bat away, collecting the key to the next level and making a swift exit. Maintaining the furious pace is a timer indicating the level of battery power in the helmet. Even if the lamp does run out another battery appears - the trick is finding your way to it in the dark.

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, are all those nice PC people sitting back and saying it's not for us? Come on folks - if you don't hurry your boat will get sunk by the ST and Amiga crowd. Are you really going to suffer that outrage?

SHAMELESS PLUG

Thanks to the following:
AMOS PD Library - 0942 495261
PDSoft Licenceware - 0702 612259
Goodman PDL - 0782 335650
Advantage Shareware - 0242 224340

Dynamite Dick is another AMOSed game, but its quality owes more to its design and superior graphics than the AMOS package. Everything from the hypnotic title screen to the animated death sequence is so polished, the only thing distinguishing it from a commercial release is the limited number of moving graphics. This is an obstacle AMOS programmers have yet to overcome - no doubt they will though. This highly addictive game is easy to get into, and devilishly difficult to put down. At this pocket-money price every arcade-adventure nut should have a copy.

MR DIG

ST/Amiga £3.00 - Joystick

Time now for a bit of nostalgia. Old-timers like me still remember the days when 2MHz 8-bits were fast, 16K was a massive amount of RAM and colour was a pretty neat idea. To this day, I can still recall lusting over the Atari 400's 256 colour palette and superb sound. So what? Well, there was something indefinably warm about the Atari's display and chunky fonts; and these fond memories come flooding back when *Mr Dig* boots up. Only the hackneyed (but nicely done) scrolltext gives away its Amiga identity.

Mr Dig is undeniably 'inspired' by the arcade classic, *Dig-Dug* – like all the oldies it's simple to play but very addictive. The idea is to guide Mr Dig around the screen digging tunnels to the bonuses and buried treasure – collect all the items and Dig moves to the next level. During his excavations Dig is relentlessly pursued by some nasties - but these can be killed either by "smart bombs" or being flattened with oversized mutant apples. Although I have yet to see one, later screens offer the promise of mutant baddies – who, if memory serves, can dig tunnels themselves.

Graphics and sound are at least up to the standard of a budget title (surpassing some). Play is fast, furious and addictive – as one might expect from a title which had to rely more on playability than technology when it was introduced. *Mr Dig* was converted by Robin Edwards of *Space Blob* infamy (see below). At this price, every home should have one.

SPACE BLOB

ST/Amiga £3.00 - Joystick

Space Blob is one of those daft games where you guide a cute little character around gathering toys, while trying not to get impaled, shot, dripped on, marmalised, squashed or any one of a number of ways of dying. *Space Blob* is an early game and fails to make use of available graphics. However, like Robin's later offering, *Mr Dig*, it is undeniably addictive and has a help feature to get you past some of the worst levels. Reminiscent of a magazine listing, *Space Blob* isn't going to win any prizes for technical excellence, but nevertheless is still worth a look.

See you next month – and don't forget to keep me informed about your PD entertainment releases.

ABOUT PDSOFT LICENCEWARE

Not another variation on the same theme - what will they think of next? The idea here is an interesting one because it aims to maintain the spirit of PD or Freeware BUT prevents libraries making a profit from someone else's work. The idea is simple, if you buy a game from a PDSoft vendor, then you can give copies away to your friends for free. If, however you want to sell the title - even charge a copying fee - then you must charge a 50p royalty which is payable to the author. Sounds like a neat idea – let me know what you think. Write to me at c/o ACE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 0NE. I am particularly interested in hearing from the authors themselves.

ROMSOFT

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HAMPSHIRES' NEW COMPUTER CENTRE

HARD SELL

Handheld gaming looks set to get a big boost in 1991 with the continued success of the Game Boy and the Lynx price cut. In fact, the encouraging news of Lynx sales in the States plus rumours of a further price reduction has prompted us to revise our predictions for this hitherto overpriced and under-supported machine.

To help you make that all-important decision, here's a full run-down on all the major contenders. These packages and prices are the ones you'll find on the shop shelves..

Generally, local dealers should be the first place to make further enquiries, although we've provided company contact numbers in case you're having real problems.

The Star Ratings are there as a rough qualitative guide; the more stars the better.

AMSTRAD GX4000

Package: GX4000 console, 2 controllers and *Burning Rubber* game.
Processor: 4MHz Z80A
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99
Contact: Amstrad 0782 566344

IN BRIEF

Amstrad have partly gone up the Commodore path, but have wisely taken the opportunity to upgrade the hardware. The palette is increased, with multitasking hardware scrolling and 16 hardware sprites increasing to 32 with interrupt tricks. Unfortunately the sound chip is the same old tinny one used in the CPCs, albeit in stereo - you can't have everything, I suppose. While some software houses express reservations of the machine being a success outside Europe (and hence reticent about committing support to it), many are working on titles for the machine.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Same as Amstrad CPC.
Palette: 4096
Colours: 32
TV: Yes.
Monitor Output: Yes.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: SCART, Amstrad socket.
Sprites: 16, 32 with hardware interrupts.
Speed: Pretty good for 8-bit technology.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor.
MIDI: No.
Stereo Output: Yes.
Performance: Unimpressive 3 channel chip as on old CPCs, but now runs independently of main processor.

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 game controllers supplied.
Ports: Monitor/TV ports, stereo headphone socket, 3 joystick ports (2 digital, 1 analogue).

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 128K
Existing Software Base: Small.but growing fast.
Current Releases: Thirty titles due by January 1991.
Prospects: Very good, with several software houses working on titles.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None as yet.
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★★
Overall: ★★★★

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx with *California Games.*
Processor: 16MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £129.95
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The Lynx was designed by a team including RJ Mical, one of the men behind the Amiga. If that doesn't convince you consider it runs a fast 6502, has 8Mb of game storage on its cards and supports multi-player games. The graphics hardware has built in hardware scrolling and image scaling. Software is a little thin at the moment but bound to increase during 1991.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102
Palette: 4096
Colours: 16
TV: No
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5 inch backlit colour LCD
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!
Speed: Fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 4 channel, 5 octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: 4 way joypad.
Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; stereo headphone mini-jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.
Cartridge Memory: 8Mb
Existing Software Base: Very small.
Current Releases: *California Games* is a great freebie.
Prospects: 200K sales in the States and increased interest means this machine is perhaps the best colour portable bet at the moment.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Very few
Maintenance: 1 year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

ATARI VCS

Package: Both VCS2600 and VCS7800 come with controller and free game.
Processor: 6507 (2600)/6502 (7800)
Console Memory: Not known.
Recommended Retail Price: VCS2600 £39.99; VCS7800 £69.99
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The VCS2600 is a reboxed version of the original Atari games console which, until a couple of years ago, remained the best selling home video games system of all time. The VCS7800 is a revamped version of the VCS2600 with a faster processor, slightly better sound and vastly improved graphics.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 192 x 160 (2600); 320 x 242 (7800)
Palette: 16 (2600)/256 (7800)
Colours: 4 (2600)/16 (7800)
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: No
Sprites: N/A/64
Speed: Slow

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Limited to 1 channel on 2600 and two on 7800.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied
Ports: 2 x 9 pin D for joysticks; TV; cartridge port.

SOFTWARE

Price: £7-13.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Small
Current Releases: Rare
Prospects: Unsure in the light of new competition from Japan.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Worth looking
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

	2600	7800
Graphics:	★	★★
Sound:	★	★★
Expansion:	None	None
Overall:	★	★★

C64 GAMES SYSTEM

Package: C64GS console, controller and 4 games (*Klax, Fiendish Freddy, Flimbo's Quest* and *International Soccer*).
Processor: 1MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99.99
Contact: Commodore 0628 770088

IN BRIEF

Take a Commodore C64 computer, remove the keyboard and stick it in an unattractive slab of a box and what have you got? A "new" console! It's an unusual move, and the signs are that Xmas '90 sales were not encouraging.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 200 in multi-colour mode.
Palette: 16
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: Yes
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: RGB
Sprites: 8
Speed: Slow CPU, helped out by custom graphics and sound chips.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: 3 channel SAM - one of the best 8-bit sound chips.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Joypad supplied.
Ports: None

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 4Mbits.
Existing Software Base: Potentially huge, but small at the moment. Commodore anticipate around 100 titles by Xmas.
Current Releases: Plenty forthcoming from various software houses.
Prospects: Uncertain. Do people really want a console version of an ageing, though admittedly good, computer? Software support is likely to be pretty good for a while at least.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

NINTENDO NES

Package: Standard Pack includes console, plus 2 game controllers and *Super Mario Brothers* game. Mutant Machine pack as above but substitutes *Turtles* game for *Mario*. Action Pack as Standard, but includes Zapper gun and *Duck Hunt* game.
Processor: Not known.
Console Memory: 2K.
Recommended Retail Price: Standard Pack £79.95; Deluxe Pack £99.95.
Contact: Deighton PR 071.836 2973

IN BRIEF

The world's largest selling console, largely because of the playability of some of its games rather than its hardware specification, which is 8-bit average.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 240
Palette: 52
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: N/A
Speed: Average

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Average

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 dedicated controllers supplied. IR wireless controllers with 30ft range available for £39.95.
Ports: None out of the ordinary.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-40.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Over 50 titles available here. Many more available in Japan but these require a converter to run.
Current Releases: Nintendo predict about 2-3 titles per month.
Prospects: In the UK, improving due to increased support – but this is yesterday's technology.
Software Loading: Instant

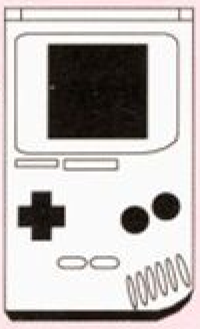
BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: A few.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY



Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.
Processor: 1MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.
Console Memory: 16K
Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.
Contact: Deighton PR 071 836 2973

IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and the two-player link-up option has tremendous potential.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.
Colours: 4 grey shades.
Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.
Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixels.
Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.
Ports: Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-25.
Cartridge Memory: 64K
Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.
Current Releases: Increasing
Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: None.
Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: Dual machine interface has lots of potential.
Overall: ★★★★★

NEC PC ENGINE

Package: Console unit, controller and free game
Processor: Customised 8-bit.
Console Memory: 64K internal, 8K video. (Turbographx: 128K internal, 32K video.)
Recommended Retail Price: N/A (US price around $199)
Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

Sadly, it now seems unlikely that this machine will ever be officially supported by NEC in the UK. Its CD-ROM add-on drive is now the largest selling CD unit on the market and is responsible for much of the recent increase in CD development. There's also a 16-bit version, vastly more powerful, called the Turbographx, but this is only rarely available through importers and at a price – usually around £300. NEC also have a handheld version of the Engine which is software compatible with its larger brother.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 216
Palette: 512 (Turbographx: 1024)
Colours: 32 - 16 background and 16 shared by sprites.
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: N/A
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: N/A
Sprites: 64 (Turbographx: 128)
Speed: Very fast considering this is an 8-bit!

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 6-channel stereo

HARDWARE

Disk Format: CD ROM at extra cost.
Disk Price: Read-only so N/A
Disk Performance: Superb - the CD ROM adds a new dimension.
Joystick: Supplied with dedicated controller.

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25-40 imported.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Large
Current Releases: Increasing.
Prospects: Good.

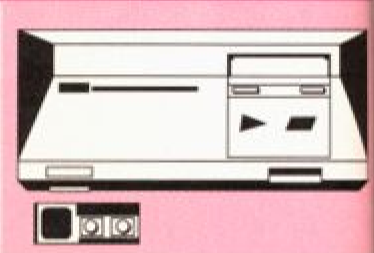
BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Currently grey import.
Second Hand Availability: V Rare
Maintenance: Watch out - grey imported machines rarely have any real warranty.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★★

SEGA MASTER



Package: Console using cartridge or smart card plus game controller and *Alex Kidd in Miracle World* game.
Recommended Retail Price: £79.99; £99.95 (+ light gun); £129.9 (+ light gun and 3D glasses).
Processor: Z80.
Console Memory: 32K.
Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071 727 8070

IN BRIEF

Japanese software base is not as good as Nintendo's but more titles reach UK. Mastertronic have given good support to the machine so the prospects look good. Like the Nintendo, however, this 8-bit machine uses established but dated technology.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 192
Palette: 64
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor: No

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV.
Performance: 3 channels.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Game controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £10-40 (typically £25)
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Very good.
Current Releases: Good
Prospects: As good as any 8-bit console.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Some
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★★★
Overall: ★★★

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Package: Console unit, controller, and *Altered Beast* game.
Processor: 68000 + Z80B support.
Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.

Recommended Retail Price: £189.99.
Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071 727 8070

IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224
Palette: 512
Colours: 64
TV: Yes
Monitor: No
Sprites: 80
Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Good
Current Releases: Few in UK at present
Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: N/A
Maintenance: One year on UK machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★★★
Overall: ★★★★★

SNK NEO-GEO

Package: Console unit, controller unit and memory card (can store 27 games scores).
Processor: 12MHz 68000 + 4MHz Z80A support.
Console Memory: 64K work RAM, 64K video RAM.
Recommended Retail Price: £399
Contact: Active Sales 081 752 0260

IN BRIEF

Technically the most advanced console currently available, the games are of arcade quality, with huge sprites and excellent sound, although the gameplay is a little lacking in the current crop of titles. The game cartridges can store up to 330 Mbits of data, but this is reflected in their price - £199.99! All is not lost, since Active Sales have launched a club where members can rent software for £25 a month. Definitely the system to have if you want to pose, and to be very poor!

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Arcade quality.
Palette: 65536
Colours: 4096
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: Yes
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: RGB, SCART
Sprites: 380
Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 13 channel stereo.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied, second available for around £70.
Ports: Walkman socket

SOFTWARE

Price: £200.
Cartridge Memory: 330 Mbits.
Existing Software Base: Few at present.
Current Releases: 12 planned by the end of the year.
Prospects: Uncertain, but the members' club could help swing chance in its favour.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None as yet.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★★★

HARD MAN AWAITS CALLS

Following David's promotion to Production Editor, the team have persuaded me to step into his shoes and manage the ACE hardware section. If you have any suggestions regarding the section then write to me at the usual ACE address or call during the Hotline hours.

Steve Cooke

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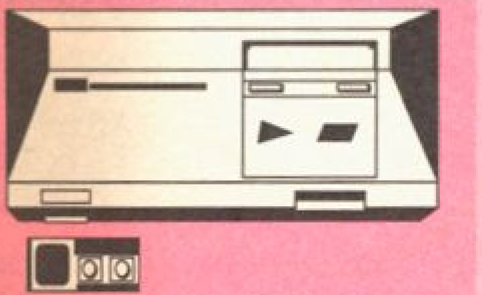
SEGA MASTER



Virgin Mastertronic have a bevvy of beautiful new games lined up which should be hitting the shelves of your local Sega stockist now or very soon.

MOONWALKER

Moonwalker, based on the special FX laden movie of the same name, gives you the chance to guide everybody's favourite waxwork Michael Jackson around umpteen levels of platform beat-'em-up action in a quest to put an end to the antics of the evil 'Mr Big'.

Although *Moonwalker* may sound a little so-so, it has several features that lift it above other beat-'em-ups. For one, the graphics are superb; highly detailed and colourful the casual viewer could easily mistake them for those of a Megadrive - and that's high praise indeed! Also, some of the fighting moves - twirls and hat-throwing - are amusingly unusual. The only dark cloud is that the gameplay is a little easy, maybe because the game is aimed at the younger Sega owner.

DICK TRACY

Yet another film tie-in, but a little more up-to-date this time. *Dick Tracy* was a big hit in the US and UK last year (although I can't understand for the life of me why - apart from the amazing set design there was very little to hold your attention. I wished I'd stayed at home and put the money I saved towards a new Master game - they're much more fun!). Basically a scrolling shoot-'em-up, interspersed with bonus levels at a shooting gallery, it's not bad fun. The graphics are a bit small but well-detailed and animated. Look out for the full review soon in ACE.

MICKEY MOUSE

Who's the leader of the gang that's great for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E. (As if you hadn't guessed from the heading!) Disney's rodent rascal makes his first appearance on the Sega in a fantastic platform game. Virgin Mastertronic hope to have this on official release in the next couple of months. And let's hope they do because this is one cracking game. The authors have managed to cram every ounce of cuteness and humour from the original cartoons into this silicon masterpiece. Full of puzzles and playability, and sporting graphics and animation of the highest order, this is one cart you really can't afford to miss!

There are no fixed release dates or prices as yet. As soon as I know more I'll let you now.

One thing these releases show is that there's still lots of life in the Master system yet - witness the graphics of *Mickey Mouse* and *Moonwalker* to see just what the console can do when pushed.

Phew! That's just about it for this month. Good games playing until next time!

MEGADRIVE

Virgin Mastertronic are pulling out all the stops to try and reduce the annoying gap between the Japanese cartridge release dates and those of the UK. There's nothing more annoying than reading about some juicy new game on the shelves in Japan and then having to wait for what seems like an eternity for the official UK release. So what can we expect to see soon?

PLEASE RELEASE ME, LET ME GO

Strider has been out for quite a few months on grey import, but now it's finally due for UK release. I've raved about the game before in this column, so I won't go on too long. Suffice to say this has to be one of the most accurate conversions ever seen. Every aspect of the original coin-op has been squeezed in this truly astonishing cart, and since the coin-op was brilliant anyway, you've got one of the best Megadrive games currently available! Definitely a 'must buy'!

Arrow Flash is another in the long line of shoot-'em-ups, this time horizontally scrolling. You know the routine - shoot baddies, collect power-ups and kill the end-of-level bad guy. It's okay, but not overly inspiring (cf 'Weedy *Seed*' overview of *Dangerous Seed* in this column for more of the same).

Shadow Dancer is a so-so multidirectional scrolling beat-'em-up-come-shoot-'em-up and was reviewed in last month's ACE. Basically 'One Ninja and his Dog'.

Dynamite Duke is a horizontal scrolling beat-'em-up in the style of *Street Fighter*. I haven't actually seen it so I can't give you my opinion on it. Look out for the ACE review soon.

WEEDY *SEED*

And what's this plopping on to my mat? Why, it's an imported copy of Namcot's *Dangerous Seed*. Guide your spaceship over vertical parallax scrolling alien worlds killing the manic miscreants, collecting multiple-level power-ups and slowly making your way to your final confrontaion with the end-of-level mother alienssssssszzzzZZZZZ

Oooops, sorry, fell asleep on the job there. I'm afraid to say that *Dangerous Seed* is a very unexciting release - this style of game has beendone elsewhere loads of time and generally much better as well. The sprites are small, the power-ups uninspired and the scrolling less than perfect. Unless you're really desperate for a new shoot-'em-up and you've bought all the good ones then don't make the mistake of parting with your cash for *Dangerous Seed*.

SEGA STATESIDE

Electronic Arts, not resting on the success of their excellent *John Madden Football* game, unveiled some very interesting new releases at the Las Vegas CES (see report elsewhere in this issue).

Sega owners who are also fortunate enough to own an Amiga or Atari ST may be familiar with the exploits of *James Pond*, the fishy superspy from Millenium. I remember thinking at the time how suitable for conversion to console the game was. Great minds obviously think alike because EA are due to bring out the game on the Megadrive (or Genesis in the US) in March.

More puzzle and platform antics are the order of the day in *Dark Castle*. Originally written for the Apple Macintosh, the conversion promises improved animation and sound effects, and full use of the Megadrive's expanded palette. It's due for a Spring release.

Sega owners starved of RPGs will be pleased to hear that *Might & Magic II* is also due for conversion. Naturally the conversion will take advantage of the Megadrive's advanced graphics and sound capabilities and have a new user interface to allow input by pop-up menus. Expect a Spring release.

CONTROVERSY CORNER

Now don't get me wrong, I think the Sega Megadrive is the best thing since Michelle Pfeiffer. However, it seems to me that there's been a bit of a decrease in the consistent quality of Megadrive releases. Whereas in the early days every cart was a scorcher (*Altered Beast*, *Golden Axe* and *Ghouls n' Ghosts* spring instantly to mind), recently it seems that for every *Strider* we have to make do with a *Hellfire*, *Dangerous Seed* or *Sword of Sodan*.

I suppose this phenomenon is inevitable as more and more is produced for the Megadrive - not every cart can be a classic. Of course this is just my personal opinion - what do you think? Am I just talking out of my... er... *rear entrance*? Write and tell me what you think at the normal ACE address - and considered debate only, please, no mindless abuse!

● **David Upchurch**

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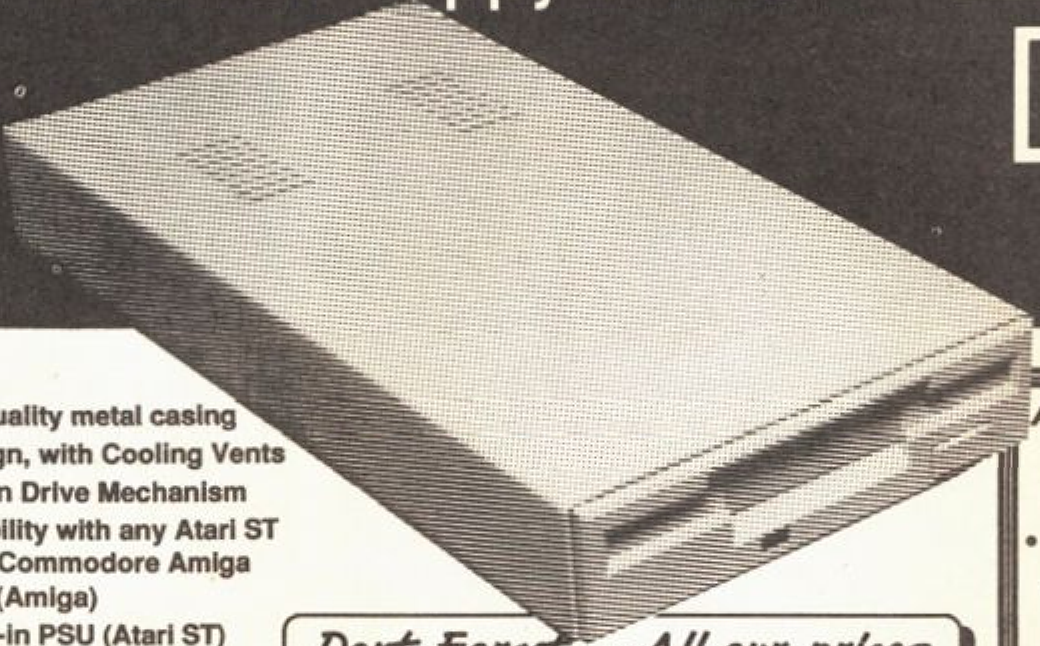

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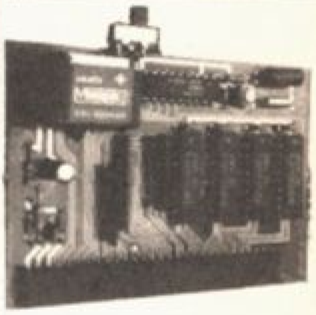

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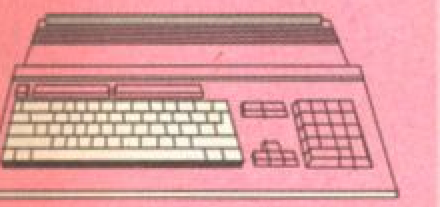


This has to be the most depressing part of the year. Christmas is already a fading but happy memory and there's nothing but cold, wind and rain for a good four months.

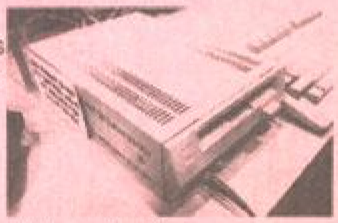
But that's not to say it's a dull time. Indeed, this March could go down in computer entertainment history as the month when the long-anticipated CD revolution started - at least if things go according to Commodore's plans! Yes, the CDTV is nearly here - honest!

At the recent Las Vegas CES (see the full report elsewhere in this issue) Commodore unveiled the much-vaunted CDTV to the waiting pack of media wolves (again) and announced that the machine would retail at $999 in the US and £699 in the UK, with the first stock hitting the shelves in mid-March. However, there are reports that Commodore are quietly confident that they can get the CDTV's price down to around £600 - which would obviously make the machine more more likely of achieving the projected minimum 50,000 UK sales Commodore are understood to be hoping for by December.

In addition, Commodore are apparently hoping to bundle some software with the package in addition to the 'Welcome' disc so you'll have something to play with when you first buy the CDTV, which should make it a more attractive purchase.

Availability shouldn't be a problem, because Commodore have signed a deal with Dixons, the high-street consumer electrical goods retailers. They'll be selling the CDTV from 100 of their stores nationwide alongside the videos and TVs (a move obviously designed to separate the machine from the computer 'ghetto').

But what of that all-important (to us Amiga owners anyway) CD add-on that'll upgrade the Amiga to a full CDTV? Well, that was on display too (below). No news as to how much it'll cost yet, but rumours are it could be a little expensive. The only thing that doesn't come with it is a remote-control unit, but we can live without that, can't we?



As with any computer hardware, it's only as good as the software available for it, so what was the product on display like? Well, reaction was mixed - but it was obvious that the developers were trying hard to use the advanced capabilities of the CDTV and it had to remembered that quite a lot of the software on display was very pre-production and could change significantly by the time it's eventually released.

PSYGNOSIS IN CD SHOCK

I managed to get a sneak look at Psygnosis' CD product in development during a recent visit to their Liverpool offices. Unfortunately I'm sworn to secrecy and can't give you full details (just like a spy film, isn't it? - "No," cry the readers). However, what I can tell you is that it's absolutely stunning. Take my word for it, if future CD product is all like this then the chances of the CDTV being a hit are assured. Look out for the full ACE report on this exciting new work in a month or two.

I CAN SING A RAINBOW

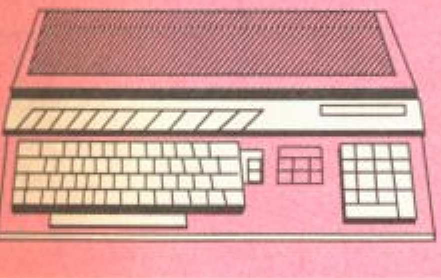
Okay, enough of this mouth-watering news about the future, what of the stuff that's out now?

Well, we've just had a copy of *Turrican II* in for review, but unfortunately it arrived too late to get into this issue. However, platform shoot-'em-up fans will be pleased to hear that Rainbow Arts have skillfully avoided the fate of most sequels and produced a stunning game that improves on the original in every way ("Not possible," I hear you cry). Over the past four days when I should've been trying to reach deadlines I've been more worried about reaching the end of Level One. Do these Germans know how to program the Amiga or what? Brilliant! Look out for a full ACE review next month. (I wanna write it, me, me, me!)

The latest release from US Gold is *Super Monaco GP*. The Megadrive version was great, but lacked the giant roadside objects of the excellent coin-op. The preview of the Amiga version I saw had managed to retain these, and the speed and smoothness of the screen update was stunning. Oh dear, I can feel that worn old phrase 'arcade perfect' rearing its hoary head. Unfortunately the version we saw had only one (admittedly quite long) track but US Gold assure us they are adding more. Again, look out for the ACE review next month.

● David Upchurch

ATARI ST



This month our ST software update is devoted to a look at Electronic Arts' sophisticated graphics package, *Deluxe Paint ST*, recently released at £59.99. Why is *Deluxe Paint ST* such an important release? There are several established ST graphics packages such as *Neochrome*, which was at one stage given away free with STs, and *DEGAS*, which offers better facilities.

But both look extremely aged up against more recent packages, particularly *Deluxe Paint* which is now up to V3 on the Amiga. *DPaint ST* includes picture distortion and animation facilities developed for the Amiga version, which make it much more than just a paint package. *DPaint ST* is not copy-protected and can be transferred to hard disk, and doesn't need more than the 512K minimum to run, though unlike *DEGAS* it demands a colour monitor or TV since it has no mono mode. It comes with a 200-page ring-bound manual, a keyboard control reference card and three disks; one the program, one contains animation utilities and the last has example graphics files.

The main display has a toolbox stretching across the middle of the screen. This contains a 16-colour palette from which you select your chosen colour, and icons representing functions such as line, brush, polygon, text, zoom and so on. As you click on each icon a further option box appears on the right hand side of the screen; this contains brush shapes, disk operation selectors and so on.

At the bottom left of the screen is the zoom box which shows the centre of the current working area in close-up. To get at your work, you can either scroll the display screen, or hide the toolbox and palette bar. So far, so what. All these facilities are available in *Neochrome* or *DEGAS*. But *DPaint*'s facilites go much further than either of these. For instance, when drawing freehand you have the choice of continious or dotted lines; you can also freehand draw filled objects. You can define your own brush shapes by "grabbing" areas of the screen, then stretch and distort them to any shape you want, and save them either individually or in "libraries" of brushes.

Drawing irregular curves, practically impossible on *Neochrome* or *DEGAS*, is easy in *DPaint*; the Curve tool lets you define a start point, end point, and two control points, so even the most complex curved shapes can be drawn. Although there's a standard Undo tool for erasing mistakes, there's also a useful Stencil function which lets you fix a picture in memory; then, no matter what you draw over it, you can restore the original by "scraping off" the overlay.

More exotic functions include colour cycling, graduated fills and a Filter mode, which changes a range of different colours into a single colour with a range of brightnesses. Apart from the standard system fonts, *DPaint* comes with a number of more exotic type styles and the facilities to create your own fonts. But *Dpaint*'s most impressive features are the animation functions.

The animation sub-menu allows you to define the number of frames in your animation, and automatically creates inbetween frames based on the position of the objects in your start and end frames. Because X, Y and Z co-ordinates can be defined, you can make objects appear to approach and recede into the picture, as well as moving up/down and left/right. Combining several kinds of rotation at once can create impressive *Top of the Pops*-style special effects! The number of frames available is limited only by the memory of your machine; you can cut and paste between drawings too. The "tweening" process takes all the hard work out of creating displays of moving images, though of course for complex lifelike Disney-style animations there's no substitute for a pencil and paper and lots of sweat. *DPaint* supports the STE's extended palette of 4096 colours, and a wide range of mono, colour and laser printers connected to either the serial or parallel port. A Viewer utility allows you to display *DPaint* pictures or animations without running *DPaint*.

Apart from being able to load *DEGAS* low-res ordinary or compressed and *Neochrome* files, it's interesting to note that Amiga *DPaint* animations (in 16 colour 320x200 format) can be converted to run on the ST, and any ST animation can be converted to run on the Amiga. *DPaint* Amiga is supported by several third-party companies producing clip art and animations, and there's some indication that the same will happen for *DPaint ST*. If that's the case, there's no reason why this powerful and economical program should not become the standard graphics package for the ST. For more information contact: **Electronic Arts, Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN.** Tel: **0753 49442.**

● Chris Jenkins

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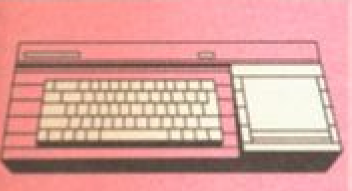

Last month we saw the one pound increase in full price games with the software houses bemoaning the fact they can't make any money. Now it looks as if all the budget labels are to follow suit in trying to make us force our sweaty little hands just that little bit deeper into our pockets?

Will the result be bulging bank accounts for the companies or will it just result in an embarrassing lack of bulges in punters' pockets?

Will the other budget labels follow suit in the battle of the budgets? Well, all the major companies are looking to increase prices to a new price point of £3.99. Hi-Tec have gone that way, with the release of Top Cat, and increases are expected to go across the board.

US Gold have announced that they will be increasing all their budget titles to the new price. They do however have a sweetener lined up though with a three month promotion that gives anyone buying a Kixx label game the chance to purchase another game, selected from a list of 22 titles for the princely sum of £1.00. The offer runs until the 30th of August or until they run out of stocks (which have a value of £100,000) The games up for grabs include some rather good ones and so first 6 impressions are that the promotion should work. Here's a list of the £1 titles:
10th Frame, 720 degrees, Auf Wiedersehen Monty, Black Beard, Bracestarr, Collosseum, Cybernoid, Hardball, Infiltrator, Krackout, Marauder, Metro Cross, Mission Elevator, Rolling Thunder, Rygar, Samurai Trilogy, Side Arms, Silent Shadow, Star Dust, Trantor, Titanic and The Way of the Tiger.

Each request for a game must include a proof of purchase and 99p for post and packaging. But it still seems rather reasonable. It's certainly the nicest way of increasing budget prices to date and I doubt that any other company anyone will deliver such a sweet pill with which to coax games buyers into spending more money.

NAVY SEALS

Okay, so you want to know what's going on in the Spectrum world then? Well, in terms of games, it looks as if this month will sees Navy Seals from Ocean rushing up the charts. Based on the soon-to-be released Orion pictures movie of the same you play one of the rough, tough highly deadly Navy Officers who are sent into Beruit to liberate some hostages, locate a stolen cache of Stinger anti aircraft missiles and generally kill anyone foolish to try stand between you and your mission objective.

There are two missions, each broken into a number of stages and the real strength of the game lies in way each mission is undertaken. Your hero, swims, jumps, climbs, swings and crawls his way around each of the backdrops. The animation is good especially when you pull yourself up onto a higher platform.

Navy Seals is certainly rather good and at the time of writing it doesn't look as if anything else will touch it this month - but then computers are a funny old game.

ESWAT

US Gold's latest piece of software for the Spectrum this month, is really the product of slippage at Christmas. Originally intended for the Christmas market, ESWAT is now actually ready to be released. Based on the Sega coin-op this is a horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up that has made the move from the arcade to the Spectrum and maintained most of the excitement of the arcade. Now if only the arcade wasn't so just above average....

TIPS

No doubt, there are many of you out there who having read up on all that's happening with the Spectrum would now gladly swap their knowledge in order to just be able to get past that spot in your fave game in order to be able to complete it. Well here's a few tips that should help.

BATMAN THE MOVIE

This tip is for the latest version of Batman - The Movie. What you must do is to load the game in the usual manner and then press A, W, S. You should hear a beep which means that you've now got infinite lives. Talk about a Bat Utility Belt(er) or what?

ROBOCOP II (128K)

Ocean's major Christmas release for this year gave us no surprises and continues along the Robobcop saga. If you're stuck however, here's an arresting little cheat that should get you through to any point in the game that you want. During the game, hold down the keys G T I and you will advance a level. Simple or what?

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Fight your way to the weaponry shop and when you get there choose the fire gun. Now, hold down fire and jump up to get the weapon to the right. You now have 999 fireball shots.

There's Spectrum software goodies up for grabs for any published letters.

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GAMEBOY

Hope you enjoyed the Gameboy roundup in the console section this month. From the next issue, you'll be pleased to know that we're giving the gameboy a lot more space in the magazine.

The quality of Gameboy titles does seem to fluctuate a lot doesn't it? I mean, one month there will be nothing like high-quality releases, and then games which really aren't suited for the machine appear. This month was an especially good example, with big-name low-fun games like Ghostbusters and Chase HQ disappointing fairly comprehensively. Maybe Nintendo should toughen up their approval system again. How do you feel about it? Would you be prepared to see a reduction in the number of titles if you were assured of higher quality?

TIPS

More excellent tips flooding in from all around the globe. This month, Nicholas Cope from Manchester comes to the aid of gamers with ***Nemesis*** and ***Mickey Mouse.***

MICKEY MOUSE

Here are 40 passwords:

41 PSRW
42 PSFW
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72 ZH92
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77 WEM2
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NEMESIS

If you're having trouble, you can gain ultimate fire power by pressing up, up, down, down, left, right, left right, b,a,b,a while the game is paused. Now you can exact some revenge on the alien hordes.

Antipodean correspondence now, from Christian Bassos from New South Wales. He sent us a massive tome of Gameboy facts and opinions. He also included some tops on the Aussie favourite, Solar Striker. So here they are!

SOLAR STRIKER

Level 1 boss: Epikhan

This big spaceship moves left an right across the screen firing bullets in three directions. To kill it, move along with it left and right, while firing, avoiding the bullets which rain down.

Level 2 boss: Destructor

The desctructor spaceship moves over the whole screen releasing large bombs. Don't panic. The bombs can be easily shot down. To destroy the ship, follow it around the screen firing. At some point, the destructor will move down the screen and then across towards you. To avoid both it and the bombs, stay in the extreme left corner until it moves up again, when you can resume blasting.

Level 3 boss: The Crusher.

The crusher tank can be defeated by sticking to the left hand side of the screen and firing at it when it crosses to your side. Watch out for its lazer beams and bullets. As the Ultra Crusher descends, move to the left and shoot it.

That's all we've got space for. Keep the letters coming!

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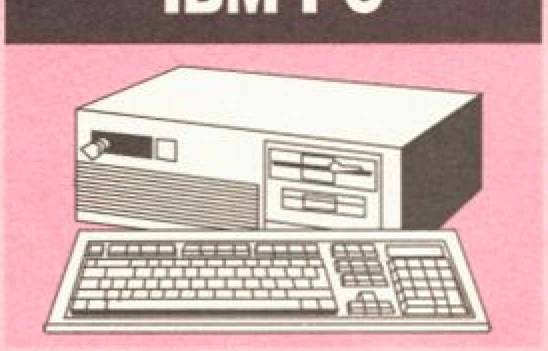


Although it may have come on in leaps and bounds in recent times, there are still precious few reasons for PC owners to feel smug about their choice of games machine. However, there is one place where your business-based machine scores highly over both the ST and the Amiga - and it more than makes up for the disadvantages... that reason is Sierra On-Line. Since its birth on Ken and Roberta Williams' kitchen table more than 10 years ago, Sierra has grown into the largest single games publisher in the United States - and it's nowadays not only the most productive, but also the most innovative of developers for the IBM and its compatibles. Sierra has become such a by-word for PC adventuring that there's now hardly a PC owner out there who hasn't trawled the seediest of bars with Leisure Suit Larry, helped good King Graham in his seemingly neverending ***King's Quests*** or gone on the beat with Sonny Bonds in one of the first two Police Quests.

But the company's development of landmark games is only the beginning of it: having been one of the first to spot the potential of the sound add-ons which first began to appear in the late '80s, Sierra quickly decided to include sound support in all of its software. Then, having done that, it also offered the hardware to Sierra software users at competitive rates in order to speed up the emergence of the PC as a leading games machine. And now that AdLib and Roland sound have become established (Stateside at least, where nearly 70 per cent of home PCs have either one or the other peripheral installed), Sierra has turned its attentions to the fledgling CD-ROM format and is hoping to perform a similar 'spreading of the word' by bundling its Compact Disk version of King's Quest V with a CD drive in yet another low-cost bundle.

And so, to the point...

All of this was impressive enough when Sierra On-Line was just some vague US-based developer who sent over the occasional game (via its Activision link-up) to keep its slobbering fans happy, but now it's about to move up a gear by opening a European base in one of the continent's more romantic urban centres - Reading. So now British Sierra addicts, this doesn't only mean that you'll be able to keep up with the quests, quicker and more frequently, you'll also be able to avail of Sierra's acclaimed customer support service (this has always been possible, but up until now it meant making a troublesome and costly transatlantic phonecall).

Sierra plans to introduce a fully automated service to dish out tips, technical support and sales advice, but until this is up and running call 0734 303171 to talk to one of Sierra's two full-time customer service chaps.

The quest has never been easier.

Speaking of quests, by now you should have seen the guide to ***Prince Of Persia*** in this month's Tricks 'N Tactics supplement (if you haven't, get straight back there and catch up with the rest of us later). For those of you who are still with us, here's another advantage to owning a PC, because while Amiga and ST owners have to content themselves to following that guide, you can make things simpler still by using this built-in cheat mode as discovered by one Michael Battersby of Packenham in Australia (g'day cobber, may your billy never boil over).

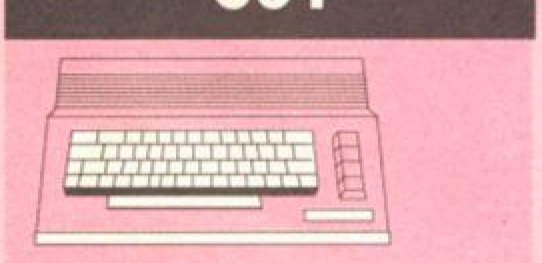
The reason that these tips are only for PC owners is that they are accessed through DOS: all you have to do is, when starting the game, instead of typing 'Prince' <Enter>, type 'Prince Megahit' <Enter> and then the following options come into play:

Pressing <Shift> and W allows you to float down any distance, but this only lasts for a limited period (a similar effect to that achieved by drinking the green potion on one of the earlier levels); press <Shift> and T to gain an extra point of health; <Shift> and I toggles the inverted screen; <Shift> and S heals a lost point of health; <Shift> and L allows you to go up a level.

And as if all of that wasn't enough, the plus key increases your available time (and for those who insist on making things difficult for themselves, the minus key loses time), while pressing U, H, J or N allows you to view what's ahead on the next screens up, left, right and down respectively. There's now little need for you to make a map, as using these little helpers should allow you to be off in dreamsville with your fair princess while all of your usually smirking Amiga and ST-owning chums are still back down in the dungeon marvelling at how many colours they have on screen (the poor chumps).

●Claran Brennan

C64



The cartridge sword, is of course, double edged. While 64 owners have been looking forward to the numerous benefits which cartridges offer them, many perhaps havent realised that with the faster loading times and "enhanced" games comes the end of budget 64 material.

Commodore are phasing out the trusty C2N tape decks, and soon there will be no more 64s made to run from tape based loading systems.

This move is obviously intended to bolster support for cartridge software. Fine. However, this move spells the end of tape games and - of course - budget software.

With no new machines being easily able to run tape software, the incentive for games producers to continue to support the system will be slight. Since such a large portion of C64 software sales are budget games

The higher unit price of cartridges means an inevitable minimum price of around £16.99

Of course, many of the cartridges will feature enhanced front ends, extra levels and an end to loading difficulties. But at the expense of variety?

Perhaps Commodore are expecting a new breed of owners to emerge. Maybe they are right and the all-cartridge playing gamesters will be happy to pay these sort of prices and will be happy with a much smaller catalogue of games. However, such a large user base of existing tape-based machines should not be ignored.

What do you think about this situation? Do you welcome a technological step forward which will yield larger (if more expensive) games. Or would you rather have the continued variety of budget software? Write to us and let us know your thoughts.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

We've had a good response to our enquiries about public domain software. Demos in particular seem to still be the thing of the moment. So, special thnks go to Chaz Bradshaw from Sheffield for sending us the following addresses. For more information, try writing to the following people.

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Disk owners can also get their mitts on some breebies from:

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Unfortunately, that's all there's space for this time, but keep your 64 mail coming!

●Richard Evans

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PC ENGINE

After several months of anticipation, the P.c Engine hand held has reached our shores. Two versions of this machine are available, and they are the American version called the ***Turbo Graphx***, and the Japanese version called the G.T. supposedly to stand for Games and Television (remember a t.v. tuner is optional). Because there are two versions available there are some disadvantages, because if you buy the American version you will have a different pin configuration to the Japanese version and so you will only be able to play American game cards, immediately cutting down the number of software titles available, but if you buy the Japanese version you will have access to all the latest and greatest games, such as Formation Football which has not yet been released in America.

Both machines are made up of a tough grey plastic which should protect them from any knocks. As a safety precaution the crystal clear, back lit, 2.6 inch colour screen has been sunken into the panel, thus protecting it from scratches. Situated below the screen is the speaker which takes over the job of blasting out the 6 channel sound. Then below the speaker is the standard joypad, with rocker, 2 fire buttons, 2 turbo fire buttons and the select/run buttons. Along one side of the machine is the tuner input jack. On the other side is the brightness and volume controls, ear jack and mains input. Along the top of this box of delights is the power switch and a recessed back panel which contains the card slot. Finally the bottom of the machine contains the multi player com-link, which enables people to play their multi player games with their friends if they have the same game and a hand held.

What about the power life I hear you cry? This is around 6 hours and is powered by 6AA batteries. What about the price? When several importers were asked there was a great variation in price. Some were quoted at £350 and others £250. The latter was fortunately the average asking price, so start saving to buy the Rolls Royce of all hand helds.

CD ROM

If you're one of the lucky people to own a CD-Rom for your P.c. Engine you must be getting a bit annoyed about the lack of software available. All this is about to come to an end, because as you may well know that the CD-Rom was released in America, and unlike card software is compatible with all Japanese machines. This means that from now on you will have access to several new titles a month, all in English text. Some forthcoming titles which will soon be available are:

T.V. SPORTS FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL:

These products are brought to us by cinamaware and both have brilliant management screens, action screens and on some occasions take the form of a television reporter in the studio or at the sports venue, giving a report on what is happening.

It came from the desert: This game was released last year to critical acclaim, and like T.v. Sports was produced by Cinamaware. The idea of the game is to save a small American town from giant ants. It also casts actors in real roles and screen to give it a cinematic effect. Sounds like a winner to us.

By the time you read this Taito, the makers of Don Doko Don and The New Zealand Story will have released two new Engine Titles, and they both sound perfectly good. Firstly comes Champion Wrestler. Up to four players can play at one time and generally try and beat each other into a tiny unrecognisable pulp. Bound to bring back some memories of the wrestling which used to be on the tele on Saturday morning. The second release from Taito is Parasol Stars (Bubble Bobble III), again featuring cute heros,cute baddies and an even cuter way of killing them. Also released this month is Thunder Blade. Yes after several years Thunder Blade is going to be released. It is supposed to feature some of the best 3D graphics on the Engine, but I'll leave it to you to decide.

If you have any comments or hints write to me Gareth Harper C/o Ace Lines. Please mark your envelope P.c. Engine.

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BOOK MARKS

Sandra Vogel checks out the bookshelves in search of literature suited to the intellect and refined taste of the average ACE reader...

STAR TREK: THE LOST YEARS

J M DILLARD.
Pan Books, £3.99
Science Fiction

Have you ever wondered what happened in the time between the last episode of Star Trek the TV series and Star Trek I The Motion Picture? Well, you need wonder no more. The official version of events has been put on paper by Jeanne Dillard. The book has the backing of Paramount Pictures.

The action starts when the 'five year mission to seek out new planets...' comes to its end, and the officers of the Enterprise move on to other things. Read the book and you will find out why Kirk changed from star ship captain to the paperpusher we meet in the first of the movies, chart Spocks life as he returns to Vulcan, and watch McCoy as he gets into an almighty scrape.

The idea behind the book is a good one, though I'd like to have seen more of the TV series characters covered. Perhaps they will crop up in 'A Flag Full of Stars' and 'The War Virus' - forthcoming sequels - watch this space.

GENERAL COMMENTS

For real trekkies this is an absolute must. For the rest of us it is probably a 'one read only' book.

IQ FACTOR	**6/10**
SHELF LIFE	**4/10**
VALUE FOR MONEY	**7/10**
OVERALL	**7/10**

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS: JUST THE WORDS VOLUMES 1 AND 2

Mandarin Books £6.99
Humour

'Hello, I'd like to talk to you tonight about a minority group of people who have no mental or physical handicaps, and, who, through no fault of their own, have never been deprived, and consequently are forced to live in conditions of extreme luxury.'

This is a quote from episode 45 of the Monty Python series. No, I haven't memorised all the episodes ever broadcast - I've got hold of a copy of volumes 1 and 2 of the scripts, which cover every word spoken in episodes 1-45. They're bound together in a single volume complete with piccies, which any Python fan would be proud to possess. One word of warning though - don't go, looking for the Dead Parrot - it 'aint there!

Hours of fun for all the family can be had just picking a sketch at random and assigning parts. Entertainment the way the Victorians used to do it (well, OK, not quite!).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Government Health Warning: Reading more than two sketches a day from this book can seriously damage your mental health.

IQ FACTOR	**6/10**
SHELF LIFE	**9/10**
VALUE FOR MONEY	**7/10**
OVERALL	**5/10**

TALES FROM THE PLANET EARTH

ARTHUR C CLARKE
Arrow Books £3.99
Science Fiction

This is a collection of Arthur C's best short stories. Most of them have been published before, but are difficult to get hold of. There are a number of older stories - The Road to The Sea, for example, the first story in the collection, was completed in 1949. This story contains one of Clarke's amazing predictions - for portable personal hi-fi systems, known today as the 'Walkman'.

There are sixteen stories in this 300 page book - which works out at excellent value for money. Each of them has an introduction by Clarke himself, specially written for the volume, and the book has a short preface by Isaac Asimov.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Clarke fans should rush out and but this now. Science fiction fans should put it on their 'wants' list.

IQ FACTOR	**7/10**
SHELF LIFE	**8/10**
VALUE FOR MONEY	**8/10**
OVERALL	**8/10**

THE COMPUTER HOBBYISTS HANDBOOK

RA & JW PENFOLD
Bernard Babani £5.95
Technical

If you, or anyone you know, has just got their mits on a computer, and want to know more about how it works etc, the first thing people will tell you is 'don't bother with the manual - it's useless'. The Computer Hobbyists Handbook could be just the answer to this dilemma. In a little over 100 pages it covers everything the beginner needs to know, from explaining processors (what's the differnce between a 8080, Z88 and 8068? (answers on a postcard please), interfaces (MIDI, printers, monitors, etc), languages, number bases, operating systems, graphics. It also has the standard appendices covering ASCII charts, decimal binary and hex conversions, computerese abbreviations and a bit of stuff about support chips.

The book is well illustrated with black and white photographs and graphics to explain things, and it is written in language which won't put the beginner off. Worth buying at the same time that you get hold of your first computer.

GENERAL COMMENTS

A useful non machine specific starter book.

IQ FACTOR	**5/10**
SHELF LIFE	**6/10**
VALUE FOR MONEY	**7/10**
OVERALL	**7/10**

IT'S A FUNNY THING

COLLECTED BY ROGER FRAMPTON
Hale. £4.95
Humour

This is a collection of funnies from the world of IT. Many of the pieces have been contributed from computer users, suppliers and publishers, though few are actually attributed. Most of the jokes are from the business rather than the home computer world. There is also a good smattering of cartoons - for my money many of these are better than the written parts.

Memorise just a few of the stories from this volume, and you will be able to amaze and astound your friends at social gatherings with vast range of computer small talk. Or, bore them to death!

GENERAL COMMENTS

Proceeds from the book go to the Great Ormond Street Hosptial for Sick Children.

IQ FACTOR	**5/10**
SHELF LIFE	**8/10**
VALUE FOR MONEY	**7/10**
OVERALL	**8/10**

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AWESOME

Psygnosis ● Amiga £34.99

A shoot-'em-up where you'll need to master four different gameplay styles if you're to survive. The first is similar to *Asteroids*, except that here your ship stays stationary and the aliens and rocks rotate about you. Next is a *Space Harrier*-like battle against a giant space dragon. After that you pilot your ship over the multi-directional parallax scrolling surface of an alien world, shooting aliens and searching for the landing bay. The final style is a *Gauntlet*-style run around the starbase looking for the entrance to the space station. The graphics for all sections wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. A stunning game, if a little derivative, and well worth its ACE rating.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

B.A.T.

Ubisoft ● Amiga £34 ● Atari ST ● PC £TBA ● C64 £TBA/cart

Set in the 22nd century, you play an agent of the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, or B.A.T. for short. The arch-criminal Vrangor (made-up name!) is holding the planet Selenia, home of the Galaxy's major businesses, to ransom with chemical weapons. There's no time to spare - you've got to find Vrangor and stop him, pronto! Two years in the making, all that effort shows in this graphic adventure *par excellence*. Every location and event is depicted graphically, with all game interaction carried out using the mouse. Not so much a game, more a way of life. As an added bonus, there's a plug-in sound card to give the humble ST Amiga-like samples.

★ ACE RATING 908 ON ATARI ST

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping , a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A good purchase for jaded Chess fans.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BATTLE COMMAND

Ocean ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST ● PC £29.99

The latest solid-polygon epic from Realtime. You control a Mauler tank through 16 tough missions, varying from straightforward seek and destroy to escorting a convoy of supply trucks to picking up a downed satellite in enemy territory. Although the accent is on action, several of the missions require quite a bit of thought to complete. During your travels you'll encounter a wide variety of enemy craft, all rendered in exceptionally fast 3D. A tad more originality and it could've been a Trailblazer.

★ ACE RATING 899 ON AMIGA AND ATARI ST

BUCK ROGERS: COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

SSI/US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £TBA ● C64 £TBA

The year is 2456, and Buck Rogers, tactical genius and fearless defender of freedom, is defrosted from cryogenic suspension to help lead rebels on a ravaged Earth to victory and freedom from a tyrannical government. An RPG with similarities to the SSI *AD&D* games, the action is viewed in familiar pseudo-3D. All interaction is menu-driven, with selections made by clicking the mouse. The number of locations are many and varied, and most are introduced by an attractive picture. Fans of this genre should be more than happy with this, and the space setting makes a welcome change from the usual medieval setting.

★ ACE RATING 885 ON AMIGA

CAPTIVE

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. *Captive*, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place *Captive* very much in the ACE-rated category.

★ ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

COVERT ACTION

Microprose ● PC £39.99

Yet another secret agent game! You play Max Remington, ex-CIA man, who is now earning a crust as a undercover investigator. However, Max is known to waive the fee for the President of the United States. On offer are four skill levels, three mission areas, three crime types and over a dozen enemy operatives to contend with. As you would expect from Microprose

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there's a wealth of detail and the tasks on offer are going to require many months of work to crack. Go to it, Max.

★ ACE RATING 902 ON IBM PC

CORPORATION

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £29.99

This role-playing cybernetic extravaganza from CORE pushes the limits of previous RPG's just that bit further. *Corporation* is a 3-D exploration, puzzle-orientated arcade combat game (?) in the mould made traditional by the original *Dungeon Master* RPG. Your objective is to find and remove an embryo belonging to the ultimate biogenetic killing machine, bred by the UCC Corp. Light-source shaded raphics and sound of film-like quality, along with excellent playability and an intuitive control method all contributed in pushing *Corporation* over the 900 mark.

★ ACE RATING 945 ON AMIGA

DAMOCLES

Novagen ● Atari ST £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95 ● PC £TBA

This unusual combination of flight sim and adventure game, and sequel to the well-received *Mercenary*, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON ATARI ST

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ● Amiga £29.99 ● PC £39.99

A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launca year ago, and now released on the ST and Amiga. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that be whispered about) Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge scenarios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this one.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99

This violent clash between two solid-polygon generated pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, with a huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're to become World Champ!

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS DRIVING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST ● PC £24.99

A 3D polygon racing game - and arguably the best yet, providing far more depth than its nearest rival, *Indy 500* though how it compares to *Hard Drivin' 2* has yet to be seen. Can be played against the clock or against another driver, in which case each designs a course, trying to exploit the weaknesses of the other player (i.e. fear of heights!). Both drivers then race on the two tracks. Spectacular wins and crashes can be viewed from any angle in the playback option. A successful mix of simulation and knock-about fun.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

HARPOON

Mirrorsoft/PSS ● PC £29.99

Quite simply the best naval simulation to be released for the General Public. The battleset that comes with the game deals with East-West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be available soon. A clever system of three map types is used to effectively manage each mission. The nice thing about *Harpoon* is that the computer takes care of all the boring mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on broad tactics. A must buy for anyone interested in modern navel warfare.

★ ACE RATING 940 ON IBM PC

THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

Nothing new in the plot department, unfortunately. Old wizard...enter dungeon...defeat monsters...avoid traps...solve puzzles...rescue Grand Wizard...etc,etc. However, the presentation is something else. An isometric-3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. **WARNING!** - this program only works on 1Mb machines!

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST**

IVAN 'IRONMAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD

Virgin/Mastertronic ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £10.99cs/£14.99dk

A hugely enjoyable rollicking romp through 8 courses of rough 'n' tumble driving action, viewed in the overhead style championed by Atari's *Super Sprint*. All boy racers should look no further. Another stunning game from the consistently excellent Graftgold, authors of *Simulcra* and *Paradroid 90*.

★ **ACE RATING 870 ON IBM PC**

KINGS QUEST V

Sierra ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● IBM PC £39.99(EGA), £44.99(VGA)

The latest in the popular series, and typing is now a thing of the past because all interaction is via a series of multiple-choice menus. You have to guide King Graham of Daventry through yet another fantasy land in search of his castle, kidnapped by the wicked magician Mordack. However, the messages are sickeningly cute at times, and those with a low sweetness threshold may choke on *KQ5*. Others should enjoy this romp through 9.7 Mb of excellent animated graphic adventure.

★ **ACE RATING 850 ON IBM PC**

MYTH

System 3 ● 8-bit formats £8.99cs/£14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of it's size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

★ **ACE RATING 925 ON C64**

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ **ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA**

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real cliff-hanger aspect to it. A gem.

★ **ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA**

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

★ **ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC**

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Set in a medieval fantasy world, you play a student at Sorceror University who wakes one day to find the campus deserted. Something terrible's happened - and it's up to you to save the day... This has all the qualities you'd expect from an adventure written by ex-Infocom staff: it's big, well-written, with lots of (sometimes quite dreadful) humour, graphics (occasionally animated) and - most importantly - an engaging plot with loads of sub-scenarios. The only minus point is the antiquated parser, which has to be to do *everything*.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

SPEEDBALL 2

Mirrorsoft ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £TBA

The sequel to the Bitmap Bros' violent '88 hit. Basically more of the same but with improved graphics, a bigger multi-directional scrolling pitch (festooned with bumpers and ball energisers), extra power-ups and armour to pick up or buy between games, smoother control and a depth-enhancing player-manager element. Highly playable, and the power-ups do have a noticeable affect on the game. The Amiga version promises to be even better with meatier sound effects. More fun than beating up your kid brother. Or even better, play your kid brother in two-player mode *then* beat him up.

★ ACE RATING 889 ON ATARI ST

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

Activision ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99

A (sort of) sequel to Paul Shirley's original 8-bit game. This one sees the return of GERALD (the uncontrived **G**eographic **E**nvironmental **R**econnaissance **A**nd **L**and-mapping **D**evice), who resembles a spinning top and you have to guide around 32 multi-directional scrolling worlds of precipitous platforms, icy ramps, lifts, switches,and roaming nasties in a search for diamonds. A clever mix of arcade thrills and puzzle-solving that requires you put in a little effort at first, but will make you glad you did in the end.

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ULTIMA VI

Origin/Mindscape ● Atari ST £TBA ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99 ● C64 £TBA

The ultimate rôle playing game. Sixteen thousand objects, two hundred and fifty characters, unlimited encounters, a quest that will take months to solve, and graphics better than you'll see on any other game of this type. The *Ultima* series of RPGs go from strength to strength. Join forces with Lord British and once more enter the fray... unbeatable stuff! And if you find it's to your taste, the icing on the cake is that Origin are now producing other scenarios using the same system: *Savage Empire* is already out...see ACE issue 39.

★ ACE RATING 950 ON IBM PC

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but any sense of deja vu is completely dispelled by the use of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the higher speed models.

★ ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans kneel and pray - an essential buy.

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ACE DIARY

FEBRUARY 1991

10-16 FEBRUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Electronic Arts: ***Warlords*** **(ST, Amiga £24.99).**

Coktel Vision: ***Cougar Force*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99; PC £24.99). James Bond-style shoot 'em up.**

Empire: ***Amazing Spiderman*** **(Spectrum, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Run, jump, climb walls and fire deadly webs in comic character-based game.**

Readysoft: ***Dragon's Lair II - Time Warp*** **(PC £44.95). Return of Dirk the Daring in interactive cartoon spread over six disks.** ***Wrath of the Demon*** **(PC £29.99). Defeat countless monsters to a background of superb graphics and smooth animation.**

Dinamic: ***Narco Police*** **(Spectrum, C64, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Defeat the drugs barons in horizontal shoot 'em up.**

Novagen: ***Damocles Mission Disk II*** **(ST, Amiga £9.99). Accessory disk to original** ***Damocles;*** **gives you five extra missions.**

Thalion: ***Dragonflight*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Limited edition version including T-shirt and badge in the box.** ***Tower FRA*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Flight sim.** ***Enchanted World*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99).**

Sunday 10
Birthday of Greg Norman, star of golf course and computer screen, in 1955.
Monday 11
Nelson Mandela released from prison in South Africa on this day in 1990.
Tuesday 12
Shrove Tuesday: the day before Lent begins, when pancakes should traditionally be eaten. Yellow lines forbidding parking were introduced on this day in 1956 in Slough.
Wednesday 13
Ash Wednesday: first day of Lent Cricket: England play one day international vs New Zealand in Wellington.
Thursday 14
St Valentine's Day
Friday 15
Saturday 16
Cricket: England play one day international vs New Zealand in Auckland. Rugby Union: England vs Scotland at Twickenham; Wales vs Ireland at Cardiff.

17-23 FEBRUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: ***Gunboat*** **(Amiga ú24.99). Take on various missions around the world in your river patrol boat.** ***Conspiracy - the Deadlock Files*** **(PC £29.99);** ***Test Drive 2 accessory disk*** **(PC £11.99)**

Empire: ***Gazza II*** **(PC £29.99). Distinct improvement on all formats from the original Gazza footie game - should have him crying all the way to the bank.**

Ubi Soft: ***Pro Tennis 2*** **(ST, Amiga £24.99). Sequel to last year's well-received Pro Tennis Tour.** ***Jupiter's Masterdrive*** **(Amiga £24.99). Space racing in various weird and wonderful vehicles.**

Sunday 17
Birthday of Barry "Dame Edna Everage" Humphries, in 1934.
Monday 18
National Day, Nepal
Independence Day, Gambia
Washington-Lincoln Day, USA
Tuesday 19
The first episode of EastEnders was broadcast on this day in 1985.
Wednesday 20
Thursday 21
Friday 22
Saturday 23

24 FEB – 2 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: ***Star Control*** **(C64 tape £10.99, disk £16.99)** ***Euro Challenge*** **(ST £11.99). Europe-based scenery for** ***Test Drive II. Muscle Cars*** **(ST £11.99).**

Coktel Vision: ***Geisha*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Somewhat risque title by the programmer of CV's earlier offering,** ***Emmanuelle.***

Readysoft: ***Wrath of the Demon*** **(C64 cartridge).**

Sunday 24
Monday 25
National Day, Kuwait
Tuesday 26
Wednesday 27
Thursday 28
Birthday of Finbar McGuigan, better known these days as Barry, in 1961.

MARCH

Friday 1
St David's Day. St David is the patron saint of Wales.
Saturday 2
The Bristol Computer Fair, a one day show covering most formats, is being held at the Holiday Inn, Lower Castle St, Bristol. Rugby Union: France vs Wales in Paris; Scotland vs Ireland at Murrayfield.

Don't forget!

ACE is now on sale on the 8th of every month. If you have an event, software release, or other bona fide announcement you'd like to make on this page, contact the diary editor c/o ACE Pink Pages at the usual address.

3-8 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Coktel Vision: ***Galactic Empire*** **(ST, Amiga £19.99; PC £24.99). Space flight game involving different gameplay styles - some martial arts, some arcade action, some trading, etc.**
Empire: ***Mega Traveller 1*** **(ST, Amiga, PC). Trading and exploration in deep space.**

Ubi Soft: ***Music Master*** **(ST, Amiga, PC, prices TBA, expect around £49). Composition and music editing utility, MIDI compatible.**

Rainbird: ***Betrayal*** **(C64 disk £19.99; ST, Amiga £29.99; PC £34.99)** ***UMS II*** **(ST, Amiga £29.99, PC, Mac £39.99). Follow up to the acclaimed wargame generator.**

Image Works: ***Back to the Future III*** **(Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga, PC). Rejoin Marty McFly for adventures in the Wild West.**

Sunday 3
National Day – Anniversary of the Throne – in Morocco.
Monday 4
Birthday of Kenny Dalglish, in 1951.
Tuesday 5
Wednesday 6
Independence Day, Ghana.
Thursday 7
Friday 8
Saturday 9
FA Cup sixth round matches to be played today and tomorrow. April issue of **ACE** hits the streets!

MEGA TRIVIA!

Our crossword missed the press this month, so to make up we're giving you a mega-quiz. Don't miss it on page 111. page

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ACE 03/91

MEGA QUIZ!

JUST HOW HOW MUCH DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT GAMES?

Stuart Neil Hardy sent us in a massive and highly entertaining quiz a few months back. We haven't got space to fit it all in, but here are some of the toughest questions to sort out the goats from the gamesters. the answers will be printed next month – let us know how well you do. Meanwhile, there's a cheque in the post for Stuart, and why don't some of you other lazy so-and-so's write in with material for the Pinks? It could be worth your while...

ROUND 1

1. What do Eagle's Nest, Druid, and Garrison have in common?
2. Who must be killed to complete the Tower of Despair?
3. Battlehawks 1942 recreates 4 historical naval encounters. What are they?
4. Why were games like Indiana Jones, Rocket Ranger, and Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain banned in Germany?
5. Who created such zany titles as Ancipital, Sheep in Space, and Attack of the Mutant Camels?
6. Name the 4 Melbourne House games featuring Bilbo, Frodo, and Gandalf as they travel through the land of Mordor.
7. Who is the giant villain of Bubble Bobble?
8. What are the only words spoken in Theatre Europe?
9. Who is the hero of Fairlight?
10. What do Guardian, Star Ray, and Dropzone have in common?

ROUND 2

Name the principal animals which appeared in all these games:
Star Paws, Savage Pond, Rana Rama, Crystal Castles, Venus, Sting 64, Samurai Warrior, Monty on the Run, On the Tiles, Tower of Babel

ROUND 3

1. Who are the 2 battling brothers in Lords of the Rising Sun?
2. Which Ocean game recently on budget caused an outcry because it involved drugging computer scientists in order to complete the mission?
3. Name the 7 characters from 2000AD who have appeared in computer games.
4. How many Frenchmen are featured on the cover of Dr Peter Turcan's Austerlitz?
5. Why are the teams in Kick Off unrealistic?
6. Which company produced such classics as IK+, Last Ninja, Tusker, and Myth?
7. What do both Tank Attack and Brian Clough's Footballing Fortunes have in common?
8. What must Wiz do to complete Wizball?
9. Who is the Angel of Death?
10. Gary Lineker has had 3 licensed games so far. Name one other sporting person who has achieved this.
11. Johnny Reb was one of the first successful wargames, with armies consisting of Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery. It's sequel featured a new type of unit. What was it?
12. What currency is used in Battletech?
13. Conqueror is an excellent tank sim, featuring vehicles from which countries?
14. Name the 4 'Outrun' games by US Gold?
15. Which superheroes appear in Dr Dooms Revenge?
16. How many Ocean games has Batman made an appearance in?
17. What does PD stand for?
18. What was the original music used in Elite's coin-op conversion 1942?
19. Old Atari 2600 cartridges come in boxes displaying a number in the top right hand corner. What does it signify?
20. Which 2 companies have produced a game called 'Barbarian' and later a sequel?

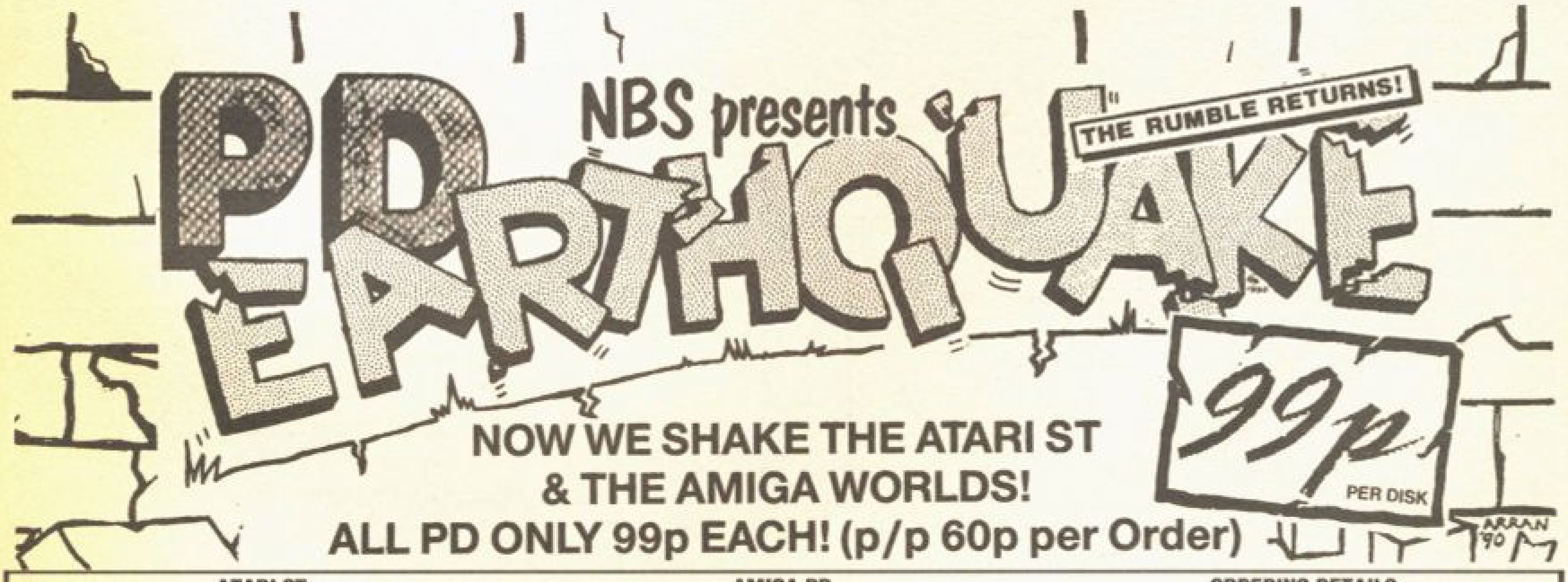
ROUND 3

Match the characters on the left with the relevant games on the right:

Leonardo
Dirk the Daring
S.Screech
Golem
Luigi
Android Blake
Norman
Marshall Soult
Borf
ED-209
Chaos
Don Badden
Berk
Godzilla
Number 5
R2D2
Fred
Spineback
Dr Watson
Shang Fei
Jake

Dungeon Master
Laser Squad
Short Circuit
Austerlitz
Dynasty Wars
Sim City
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles
Droids
Kick Off
TV Sports Football
Pipeline
Escape from the Planet of The Robot Monsters
Zoids
Sherlock
Escape from Singe's Castle
The Lord of the Rings
Greyfell
Robocop
Super Mario Bros
Trap Door
Space Ace

Answers and ratings next month!



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ATARI ST

All disks are SINGLE SIDED & 1/2 MEG unless otherwise stated

SD 002	LIFES A BITCH	Another great demo by the lost boys
SD 503	PREDATOR	Brilliant animation taken from the film (D/S)
SD 504	SO WAT	A collection of quality demos from the Carebears (D/S)
SD 505	WHAT TAHECK	Another good set of demos from the Carebears (D/S)
SD 508	CUDDLY DEMO	Brilliant demo with many (D/S)
SD 509	UNION DEMO	Another excellent Multi part demo (D/S NOT STE)
SD 511	ROBOCOP 2 DEMO	Collection of pix & samples from the film (D/S)
SD 521	STAR WARS DEMO	The demo of the movie, with anims & sound (D/S)
SD 523	SALON DE LA MICRO	Good music. (NOT STE, better with 1 meg D/S)
SD 524	BATMAN THE MOVIE (3 DISK SET)	Anims and sound from the film (This demo requires SD 525 & SD 526 to work properly) (D/S)
SM 515	RUDE DEMO (3 DISK SET) - AMUSING PUB DJ RAP, RATHER RUDE! (This demo requires SM 516 and SM 517 to work porperly) (D/S 1 Meg)	
SM 531	LOVESPY DEMO - Quality music demo, pity about the GFX! (D/S 1 Meg)	
SN 500	WALKER DEMO 2	The walker takes Chicago (D/S,1meg)
SN 504	THE RUN	Great animation of a police chase (D/S 1 meg)
SN 506	DRAGONS LAIR ANIM	Digitised from the Laserdisk(D/S1meg)
SN 507	CALIFORNIA RAISINS	Dancing raisins! (D/S 1 meg)
SR 002	VIZ SLIDESHOW	Full of hand - drawn artwork from the comic.
SG 001	STAR TREK NEXT GENERATION	Brilliant strategy game, good digitised FX (D/S)
SG 005	DIE ALIEN BLOB	A good scrolling shoot em up
SG 007	NAVEL BATTLE	A good version of the classic battleships game
SG 008	VIRUS	Save your computer from the lurking virus! (NOT STE)
SG 011	ZOG	Little brainpower required here! Blast everything!!
SG 013	FUZBALL	A good platform game
SG 014	ENGLAND TEAM MANAGER	Think you could do better??
SG 015	A DIDLEY DILEMMA	A great adventure game
STE ONLY	DEMOS (All STE disks are DOUBLE SIDED 1/2 Meg unless stated)	
ED 002	BOING STE	Featuring a BIG bouncing ball (1 Meg)
ED 005	JUNGLE DEMO	Great graphics and stereo sound effects!
ED 006	PSYCADELIK HOUSE	No, not a spelling error, it's ACIID!

REMEMBER TO STATE ATARI PD

AMIGA PD

D	222	CRIONICS TOTAL DESTRUCTION (1 MEG)	Some great effects
D	223	BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO 2	Very popular at the recent show
D	224	INDY 500 GAME DEMO	Non payable demo of the game
D	225	HORIZON MEGADEMO (1 MEG)	Includes best ray traced anim ever?
D	235	SWIV GAME DEMO	Playable demo of this great game
D	236	GOLDFIRE ULTIMATE FX	This group continues to improve!!
D	238	ANARCHY PRESENTS DEXION PARTY DEMOS 1	recent good demos
D	377	NEWTEK DYNAMIC HI-RES SLIDESHOW (1 MEG)	Piccys from the ads
D	381	FRAXION FANTACY SLIDESHOW	great presentation, great piccys
D	390	LIVE CORRUPTION - NAPALM DEATH SLIDESHOW	Heavy!
D	555	BATMAN THE MOVIE ANIMATION (1 MEG)	Good funny cartoon movie!
D	559	MAGICIAN AND JOGGER ANIMATIONS (1 EMG)	Ray traced anims
D	560	CAR & UNICYCLE ANIMATION (1 MEG)	Brill anim, a must for fans!
P	005/6/7	LOST IN SPACE (2 MEG 3 DISKS)	Brilliant animation
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M	183	DEXION MUSIC	some great computer music
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U	266	C-LIGHT (1 MEG)	recently praised ray traced util (why pay more?)
U	289	BIOHYTHERMS (1 MEG)	Do you feel good today? This will tell you!
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G	142	PD GAMES COMPO 3	Great Pacman plus 2 others
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G	155	SUBCULTURE GAME DEMO	'Privateware' level 1 of a good horizontalSilky smooth machine coded, scrolling shoot-em-up. (If you like thegame, buy from author! address on the disk

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WILL anybody please help me in getting off Level 5 "the office" on last Ninja 2 and what to do for levels 6-8 Help greatly appreciated Write to B.O'Shea, 12 Summers town Rd, Wilton, Cork, Ireland.

ATARI LYNX owners help is at hand. Fed up with no-one reviewing games for your machine then send SAE to Andrew Reid, 63 Croftway, Selby, North Yorks,. Please write and support.

C64 Frank Brunos Boxing codes wanted Pay £1.50 for all of the eight codes Tel: 711817 Earlsdon as soon as possible.
Has anyone got a poke for the C64 version of Operation Wolf or any tips to get past the third level Urgently needed. Address Mr Taylor 125 Kingston Rd Earlsdon Coventry.

Hints and Tips wanted on any sega Master System game. Contact Ryan on 0924-252825 after 6pm.

I can help you with the following games :- Ultima 4, Leisure Suit Larry 1,2,3 Police Quest 2, Kings Quest 1and 4, Space Quest 1and 3, and Dungeon Master. Also can someone please supply me with some hints for Champions of Krynn and Ultima 5. If anyone is needing help send SAE to Greg Johnson, "Norelle" Roma, PO Box 138, Queensland 4455 Australia.

Help the Pawn has me up the wall. Can anyone help me with this plus Sun Dog and Catch 23. Write to C.Lrush, 70 Pargeterst, Birchills, Walsall, WS2 8RP

USER

Got an IBM Combat? Fly the Simfly Club SAE please for infopac 2 Henley Manor, Raincliffe Ave, Scarborough YO12 5BU.

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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who........! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), and that could win you undying fame...or shame! Take the risk!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

Continuing Augustus De Silva's solution

Having visited the barber your hair should go long and blonde. Go west to the nudist beach, get the bikini bottom on the rock then go east and south. Wait once in the restaurant then leave. Wait then go to the guest room and to the dressing area near the window (this is embarrassing).

Wear the bikini and put either your money or the soap in the bikini top. Go to the barbecue to be waxed. Pass the KGB agents (they won't recognise you). Now go east to the edge of the cliff and change back to normal. Once at the aeroporto drop the flower for the KGB agents then enter.

Go west then north and sit inside the barbers. If you bump into a woman don't go with her. Get your hair cut then go east and east again. Wait at the baggage hall then pick up the bag with the bomb in it. After the explosion buy a ticket then show your passport and go east again. Read the sign and order a blue plate special, getting the hairpin from the meal when it arrives. Eat the food then use the machine on the right to get a parachute.

Go north and take the pamphlet, give the ticket in and go east. Once you sit down get the sick bag then give the pamphlet to your friend Ken. Stand up, go east, put on your parachute, use the pin on the right then push handle to open door.

CAPTIVE

A few hints to get you started.

Last month we looked at general tips and techniques to get started, and some of the pitfalls to avoid. This time we'll examine some of the goodies you can buy and find and how to use them.

Codes:

Two types of men, professors and guards, wander around the bases carrying clipboards. Both types of men are quite easy to kill – they won't attack you unless they are hurt first, at which time they become vicious. The professors drop codes for probes while the guards drop those for the gates and wall openings.

Not all codes are found near their point of use, some are even on different floors. Every time you find a new code, write it down CAREFULLY. There's nothing more frustrating than selling a clipboard only to find your notes are incorrect – yes, it did happen to me! Codes used to open gates or remove walls can be re-used to close them again (for word codes simply retype the code while for patterns simply spoil the arrangement).

Maps and Optics and Cameras:

As soon as possible, buy optics II, III and IV and a camera. Used in combination you will have a powerful method of finding your way around and spotting trouble before it hits you. To set up the camera, simply drop it on the floor ahead of you and it will spring to life.

Make sure the monitor is connected then simply click in its centre to move the camera forward and click on the arrows to swivel left or right. Doors and walls will stop it but it can cross fire and water and walk through most monsters. (In some places there are invisible walls which block your progress. If you appear to be stopped by a glass wall simply smash it.)

Using the camera you can check out a new area with no risk. Pressing the green button changes the display and shows a small picture of the camera's viewpoint as you would see it. Pressing the red button detonates the camera which then damages any monster on the same square.

The Route Finder is used in the open to point to the base door or your lander, while inside the base it points the fastest way to the exit – wear it before you blow up the generators. The Radar gives early warning of monsters by displaying the floor ahead with any monsters shown as light squares. This is especially useful for the economic use of ammunition when shooting through holes.

The Mapper is VITAL although it takes some getting used to. As you move around it shows areas you have visited in some detail while unvisited and areas of darkness are black. One thing to watch for are holes in the floor and ceiling which don't hold a ladder. The upper ones are extremely difficult to spot by eye but show as stairs on the mapper.

The display can also be marked by clicking

LET ME KNOW!

If there's any special subject you'd like to see covered in Adventureline, then let me know at the address in the panel on the left. I'm particularly interested in any comments on the newer adventures, such as Sorcerors Get All The Girls, Wonderland, and Timequest. Is there ANYBODY still playing the old, traditional adventures?

the button. This will bring a flashing dot to the screen which helps to identify things like moveable walls for later. Another handy use for markers is to pin down code cupboards for later as these are easily missed once the cupboard doors have gone. Don't forget to delete markers after use or you'll soon become confused by all the little lights.

When orientating yourself with the mapper you might find the Magna-Scan (compass) handy at first. Later, when you have sorted out the mapper and when your monitors are bristling with shields and Anti-Grav it might be better to sell the compass back to the shop

Dev-Scapes:

In the early stages, the only Dev-Scape you need is Anti-Grav (Basic) which turns you upside down and allows you to reach ceiling holes. Walking around on the ceiling is handy round about level 4 where you meet floating monsters and your weapons only tend to shoot low down, passing straight underneath them. A quick flip of your party and you're back on level terms again. Watch where bullets go from different guns and try to carry a mix of weapons on these middle levels, some shooting high and others low. I found Hunters and Magnums to be a good combination.

As mentioned earlier, Anti-Grav is handy when shooting through holes. Cannons, for instance, shoot low, but turn over and you have a very potent weapon from fairly good cover. Don't get too complacent though – some monsters can shoot through the holes at you!

Other handy gadgets in the Dev-Scape range are Fixer and Restorer. The Fixer will repair any damaged body parts up to a maximum of 10% efficiency. Not only does this make damage cheaper to repair at the shops, it also allows you to get hands and arms back in use so you can fight, and legs back to speed you up when frantically fleeing. The Restorer is simply used to charge you up again when power points are sparse. Both these gadgets are worth buying as soon as possible and carrying constantly.

Shields are very efficient against the weaker monsters and you only need your two front men to wear them. It's worth leaving them on as long as possible as a first defence against sudden attack, but watch your power. Later you will find the deflector useful as it both shields you and turns a monster's fire back on him. Unfortunately it is expensive both to buy and repair.

Both shields and deflectors disintegrate if they reach 0% efficiency so try not to let them get too damaged. It costs about half as much to repair a badly damaged device as it does to buy a new one (assuming you can find a nearby shop which stocks the device).

The other two Dev-Scapes, Greaser and Power-Sapper are less useful, and in fact, the power sapper is positively dangerous. Who in their right minds would spend money on a device to drain power? Any ideas?

More hints next month but for now happy adventuring, and don't get too addicted.

ZAK McKRACKEN

Another helping of Mike Bareham's solution.

Walk to the centre of the room and use the glowing object on the base. Walk away from the machine and use the yellow crystal. Click on the Lima location which is on the middle bottom of the old map. You will now be teleported to the other eye in the huge carving. Pick up the candelabra. Use the yellow crystal and click on the Egypt location. Walk to the machine and use the candelabra on the glowing object. Put on the wetsuit and the oxygen tank. Use the duct tape on the fish bowl. Put on the taped fish bowl. You are now wearing your spacesuit.

Walk away from the machine and use the yellow crystal again. Click on the Mars face chamber. You are now in the Mars face chamber. Find this on the enclosed map. Use the yellow crayon on the strange markings and draw the diagram you made called number 3. The three doors at the back of the room will now open.

Now use the Mars face map and find your way out to the exit. You will have to use the lighter to find out where you are going because the doors are coloured. When you find your way out of the maze and into the great chamber, walk to the exit and walk left to the landing site. Switch to Melissa.

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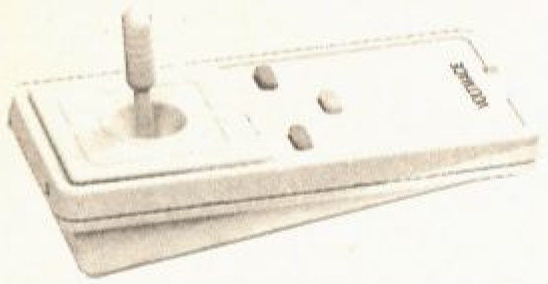

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ACE DEALS

Our crossword went missing this month – many apologies. There's a quiz on page 111 to make up for it, and here's our regular bargain spotters section...

Sales are in full swing throughout the **Virgin Megastore/Games Centr** chain, with some appetising red tions on a number of game

Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon*, f instance is being sold at £14.99 on the ST, and £19.99 on the Amiga – a cut of £10 from the original price. Similarly, *Dungeon Master* is also being sold at £10 off for both ST and Amiga versions, while *Harpoon* on the PC is going for £29.99.

Other titles from the Mirrorsoft stable are also going for a song, although stocks were limited when the sale began, so you may have to hunt through a couple of Virgin Games Centres to find them. There's a fiver off *Cadaver* (ST and Amiga, now £19.99), *TV Sports Basketball* (PC, £24.99) and *Wolfpack* (Amiga, £24.99), with £10 off the PC version of *Wolfpack* at £24.99.

Or perhaps you fancy some Accolade titles for less than £5? Virgin has limited quantities of the following: *Fast Break* (Amiga), *Day of the Viper* (Amiga), *Third Courier* (PC), *Don't Go Alone* (PC) and *Steel Thunder* (PC) – all selling for £4.99. And these Accolade games are going for £9.99: *Grand Prix Circuit* (Amiga), *Test Drive II* (Amiga) and Jack Nicklaus's *Golf* (Amiga and PC). These are just some of the items currently discounted in Virgin's Games Centres – and there are plenty of non-software sale items in the stores as well.

HARD SELLS

If it's hardware rather than software bargains that you're looking for, take a trip north to the **Computer Store** chain (details of branches below). Here you'll find the Commodore Amiga Screen Gems pack has been reduced to £359.99, plus all buyers will get 10 software vouchers at £1 each to be spent in the store.

If you buy a Sega Megadrive at any Computer Store outlet, you'll be able to pick up a free game of your choice to the value of £34.99 – that's in addition to the game already bundled with the Megadrive. And Sega Master Systems have been reduced by £10 in all Computer Store branches.

Further north still, in the **ComputerShops/Byteware** chain of stores, there are special promotions going on throughout February concerning Gremlin's *Team Suzuki* and Psygnosis's *Lemmings*. Check your nearest ComputerShop outlet for full details.

WHERE TO GO TO FIND THEM

You can find Computer Shop outlets in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; Newcastle, Leeds, Preston, Sunderland, Stockton and Nottingham. Also part of the Computer Shop chain are the two Games Store outlets in Carlisle and Middlesbrough, which stock role-playing games as well as computer software.

Virgin has its Games Centre outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 100), Bristol, Kingston and Oxford, and also in Megastores in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham.

The Computer Store chain is based in Yorkshire, with shops at Printing Office St, Doncaster; Ivegate, Bradford; Trinity St Arcade, Leeds; Market Place, Huddersfield; Westmoreland St, Wakefield; St Sampson's Square, York; The Woolshops, Halifax; Market St, Barnsley; High Street, Scunthorpe; Pinstone Street, Sheffield, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham.

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock. Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

ATTENTION DEALERS!

Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.!

SHOP WATCH!

Software seller Dirk Longhorn looks back on the good old, bad old days and offers a small prize to nostalgia freaks...

While clearing out an old desk from the office recently, I came across a collection of photographs from Autumn 1986. Initially my attention was focussed onthe way the shop itself had changed: most of the posters around the walls seemed to be promoting Ariolasoft products such as *Stealth*, *Archon*, *Racing Destruction Set* and an early icon-driven adventure, *Wild West*.

At the time I thought that those products were state of the art and essential purchases, but they sold like the proverbial sack of dead leaves dipped in urine, which is a shame. The software titles that really were doing the business were *Gauntlet*, *Jack the Nipper*, *Footballer of the Year*, and *Gunship*. Amazingly – or not – *Gunship* still sells well today on all formats, while the others have long since joined the budget boys on the bottom shelf and (quite right too) are submerged beneath the ever-increasing amount of £2.99 simulators.

The joystick section was dominated by one range: Cheetah. Even now, their two models (125 and Mach 1) still sell well, but nobody could claim the range has evolved in any way. Consequently their 'sticks appear (unfairly) dated in comparison to some of the 'triumph of the stylists art' that are currently dominating that section.

The peripherals section was largely taken up with add-ons for Spectrums: replacement keyboards, joystick interfaces (three different types!), sound samplers, printer interfaces, MIDI interfaces, light pens, drum machines, Microdrives etc etc etc. The gob-smackingly staggering thing is how few of these devices actually worked adequately (or at all, in some cases)

By far the biggest change, though is in in the choice of machines we offered for sale. In those days, you could buy the Sinclair Spectrum +2 for £149, the C64 'Connoisseur Pack' for £249, the Sinclair QL (a few left at £199), the C128 for £299 and two new kids on the block, the Atari 520STFM for £469 and the Amiga 1000 for... gasp...£1195. We don't appear to have stocked consoles in any form!

Nowadays of course the choice is huge and far more reasonably priced, but isn't it disturbing that so many of the class of '86 are still with us? Albeit at reduced prices? Where are the class of '90's Young Turks? Desperately promising to kick ass, as the ST and the Amiga were back then?

Sadly, the only new kids are coming from the console streets: the Megadrives, Super Famicoms, Neo-Geos, PC Engines and the hand held delights of the Lynx, Game Boy, Game Gear, and Game Mate (try yelling that in certain pubs – 'Who wants to see my Game Mate!?).

Unless one includes the PC clones, there has been NO new computer either readily available or waiting in the wings to replace some of the older examples in the public's affections – bad news for those of us who prefer a more complex user interface than a couple of buttons and a rocker pad:

One last thing – there was a game released at this time (at £49.99) called *Defender of the Crown* – I played it again before I wrote this piece and it really is time Mindscape (or whoever) re-released this little gem at a budget price. It's far too good to languish in a 'waiting room of fame' waiting for ACE to do a feature on it. Talking of which, John Minson's excellent re-review of *Ant Attack* stated that the follow-up by Sandy White was called *I of the Mask*, but it was actually *Zombie Zombie*, which had one of the most user-unfriendly loaders of all time: the volume AND the azimuth had to be spot-on for the average Speccy to load it, which is possibly why it disappeared without trace.

In those days, Sandy White's programming feats were always credited to "Sandy White &......"...who? A CDTV shirt to the sender of the first postcard to the usual address, marked Pink Pages Shopwatch Compo, with the right answer.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA MICROMANNICA

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection – and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

Here it is...a list of those vital topics that every up-market gamester needs to have at his command. Just because you thrashed the host at two-player *Tetris* doesn't mean you'll be the star of the party. No chum, you need know-how. And here's where to find it....

Each entry has a brief explanation, followed by a reference to an issue, so that you can hunt down the full lucid, in-depth, ACE assessment.

At the time of writing, back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 onwards except Aug88/11, Mar90/30, May90/32, Aug90/35 at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to the address below. If the issue you require is not available, the return of your payment may take some time – you are therefore strongly advised to telephone 0858 410510 before sending your order to check that the issue you require is still available.

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- **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]
- **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]
- **BATTLETECH,** "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]
- **BIT BOPPER**, the world's first total audio-visual entertainment system by Technation. Alex Blok's cyberscratch bit-tripper packs twin 32-bit decks, Sony erasable optical disc and custom-made video samplers. [ACE19]
- **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.
- **CDTV,** Commodore's attempt to bring multi-media to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]
- **COSMIC OSMO,** the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.
- **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]
- **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]
- **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]
- **INMOS FLIGHT SIMULATOR**, the world's first multi-player Transputer game running at 23 frames per second on 11 Transputers. [ACE7]
- **INTEGRATED FLIGHT AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES SYSTEM**, Plessey's answer to boring plane journeys - video games displayed on the seat in front of you. [ACE25]
- **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]
- **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]
- **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]
- **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]
- **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]
- **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]
- **TURBOEXPRESS,** currently the best colour handheld console - a portable version of the NEC PC Engine, fully compatible with existing games cartridges. [ACE35]

GAMESBUSTING WITH TNT BACK ISSUES

If you're looking for game solutions, here's a reminder of some of the games we've carried solutions to in past issues of ACE. We'll update this list next month and also be giving you a more comprehensive listing of topics covered in back issues.

ISSUE 29
Dungeon Master Guide (part one) - Les Rigden
AD&D and *Bard's Tale* - Colin Taylor
Batman- the Movie - Adam Morley

ISSUE 30
Dungeon Master Guide (part two)

ISSUE 31
Space Ace - David Williams and Chris West
Dungeon Master Guide (part three)
Future Wars - Phil Thompson

ISSUE 32
Dungeon Master Guide (part four, final part)
Complete guide to *Y's* - Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook

ISSUE 33
No guides or solutions, but loads of shorties

ISSUE 34
Castle Master - Incentive
Midwinter - Microprose
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part one) - Jon

ISSUE 35
Drakkhen Guide (part one) - Adam Morley
Xenomorph (part one) - Alan Coates
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part two)

ISSUE 36
Defender of the Crown (mini players guide) - Paul Thomas
Lots of shorties

ISSUE 37
Drakkhen (part two)
Xenomorph (part two)
Guide to hacking on C64 (part three)
The ACE guide to solutions.

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THE BLITTER END

CAN'T WE DO BETTER THAN CD ROM?

It could only happen in the computer business. We either spend our time and money trying to squeeze our games onto floppy disks, which are relatively expensive to produce when your game needs eight of them, and which can easily be copied by the unscrupulous, or we try and cram them into cartridges which cost a fortune and have limited capacity. And all the time we're sitting around telling each other that all will be well because soon we'll have this optical disk thingy called CD-ROM which can't be copied, carries oodles of data, and costs pennies to produce.

Unfortunately CD-ROM is a rubbishy standard based on a system devised by the music industry and quite incapable of delivering data fast enough to animate the complex screens of today's games. Instead of everyone getting together to produce a new CD standard, everyone is going off on their own to try and find ways of making CD-ROM go faster, using either add-on hardware like DVI that costs more than the drive itself, or else spending huge amounts of money trying to solve the problem in software and, as likely as not, getting nowhere fast.

The hideous truth is that CD-ROM just isn't good enough for gamesters. We're still waiting for CD entertainment because everyone is still trying to make something of it. CDTV is a brave attempt, CDI an expensive one. Blitter reckons that the best thing to do would be to start all over, and design a basic optical storage system that gives us what we want. It wouldn't be a problem to produce – in fact one Lucasfilm employee claims he's already designed such a system on paper, giving the impression he did it during a lunch break.

But it won't happen. We'll still get those glorious CD games and yes, they will be everything they've been promised to be. They'll just cost us far more than they need have done because, at the heart of the system, that cranky old CD-ROM drive will be spinning away and the rest of the kaboodle will be straining to overcome its limitations.

* * *

You expect to hear a few sick stories in Las Vegas, but this one really takes the biscuit. Members of a UK software house booked into a hotel and demanded to see their room. It stank. On closer inspection, the smell appeared to be coming from a dead body, stuffed between the mattress and the bedframe. 'I say,' remarked one of the lucky lads, while the other was being sick in the bathroom, 'you obviously don't air your rooms nightly.'

* * *

The ASA (Advertising Stadards Authority) has rejected a claim against ACE which alleged that the FAST ad encouraging youngsters to grass on their criminal colleagues is neither indecent nor encouraging greed. 'We do not object', say the ASA, 'to the advertisement which in our view presents a light-hearted story to draw attention to a serious issue.' Thanks and, by the way, ACE does pass on the addresses of all those trying to 'swap lists' through the magazine to FAST.

* * *

Finally, our condolences to Ian Richardson of Gremlin, who was unable to fit into his Formula First car at the companiy's recent Brands Hatch launch. Rumour has it that the next Gremlin game will be...Range Rover Rally.

Blit blit!

OOPS!

Our monthly crossword took a dive this month and missed the press, for which many apologies. It will be back again next issue. This has meant some minor rearrangements in this month's Pink Pages: the Dealers section is now on page 119 and on page 111 you'll find a very tough quiz set by Stuart Hardy. If you reckon you know about games, this could change your mind very quickly! The answers and ratings will be published in next month's Pinks.

NEXT MONTH'S SHOCK HORROR

Can you take it? Next month's ACE features a red-hot exclusive report on a new form of games technology that's going to turn the entertainment world completely on its head. Going one step BEYOND virtual reality, ACE will be revealing in detail the extraordinary developments being carried out by Apollo Technology in Wales. If you thought VR was out of this world, this is going to blow your mind!

In a lighter vein, we will also be bringing you another of our 'Temporal Fax' features (remember Gamesworld?), this time reporting on the unusual – and mildly disgusting – biology of extra-terrestrial gamesplayers. You have been warned....

You'll also be faced with some numbing facts about who gets your cash when you buy a game. Spending those pennies may never be the same again.

ACE April 91 Issue 43
On Sale March 8th

GIVE THIS FORM TO YOUR NEWSAGENT!

Dear Newsagent,
I am highly intelligent, refined, sophisticated, modest, truthful, and hold the world high score record on Defender. I understand that there may be a massive rush for copies of ACE next month due to their world exclusive feature on Apollo Technology (Wales). I must NOT miss out!

Please therefore reserve me a copy. I shall be eternally in your debt and promise not to report you to the Customs and Excise department for alleged VAT fraud, involving you in endless paperwork and probably resulting in a terminal duodenal ulcer.

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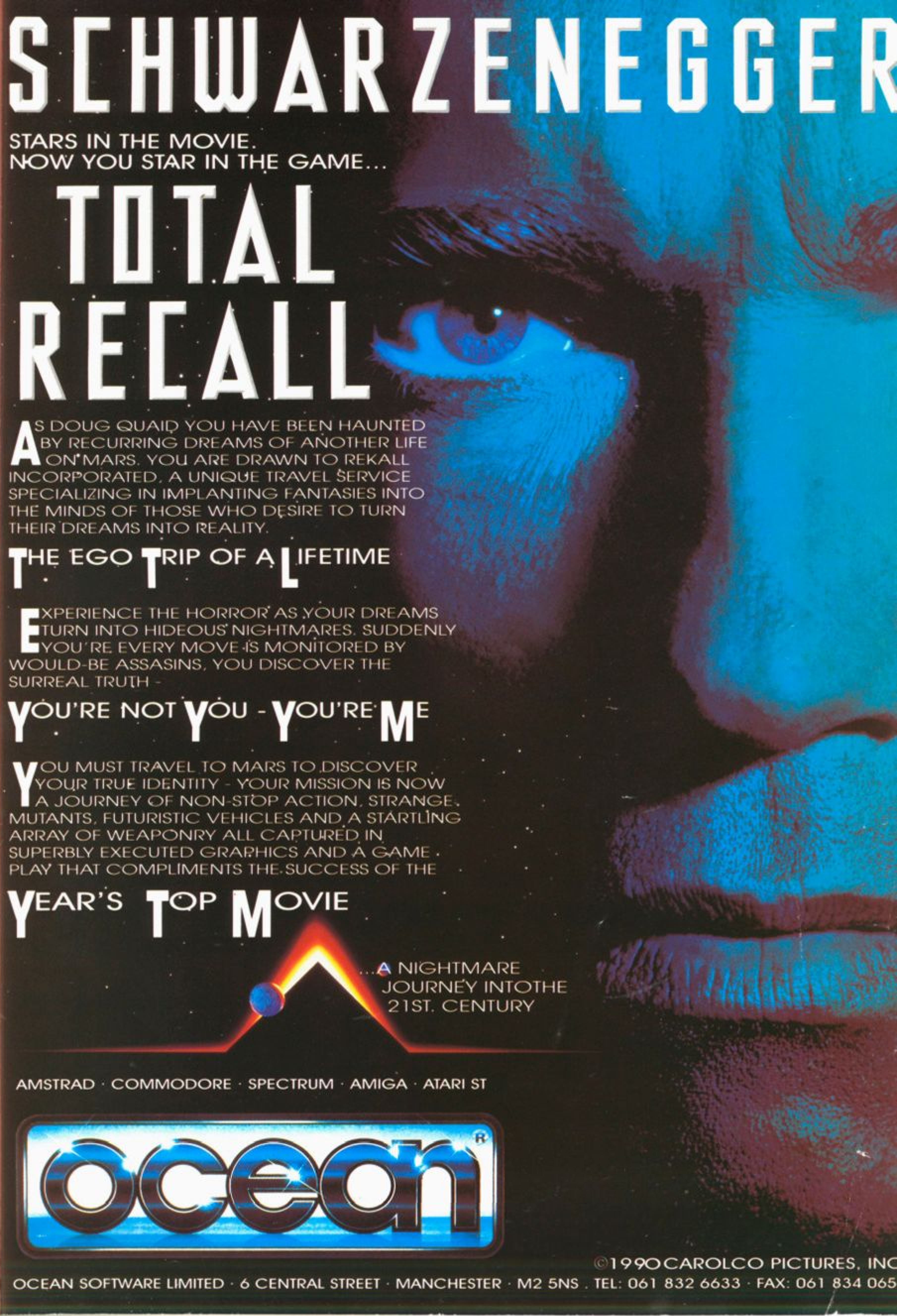

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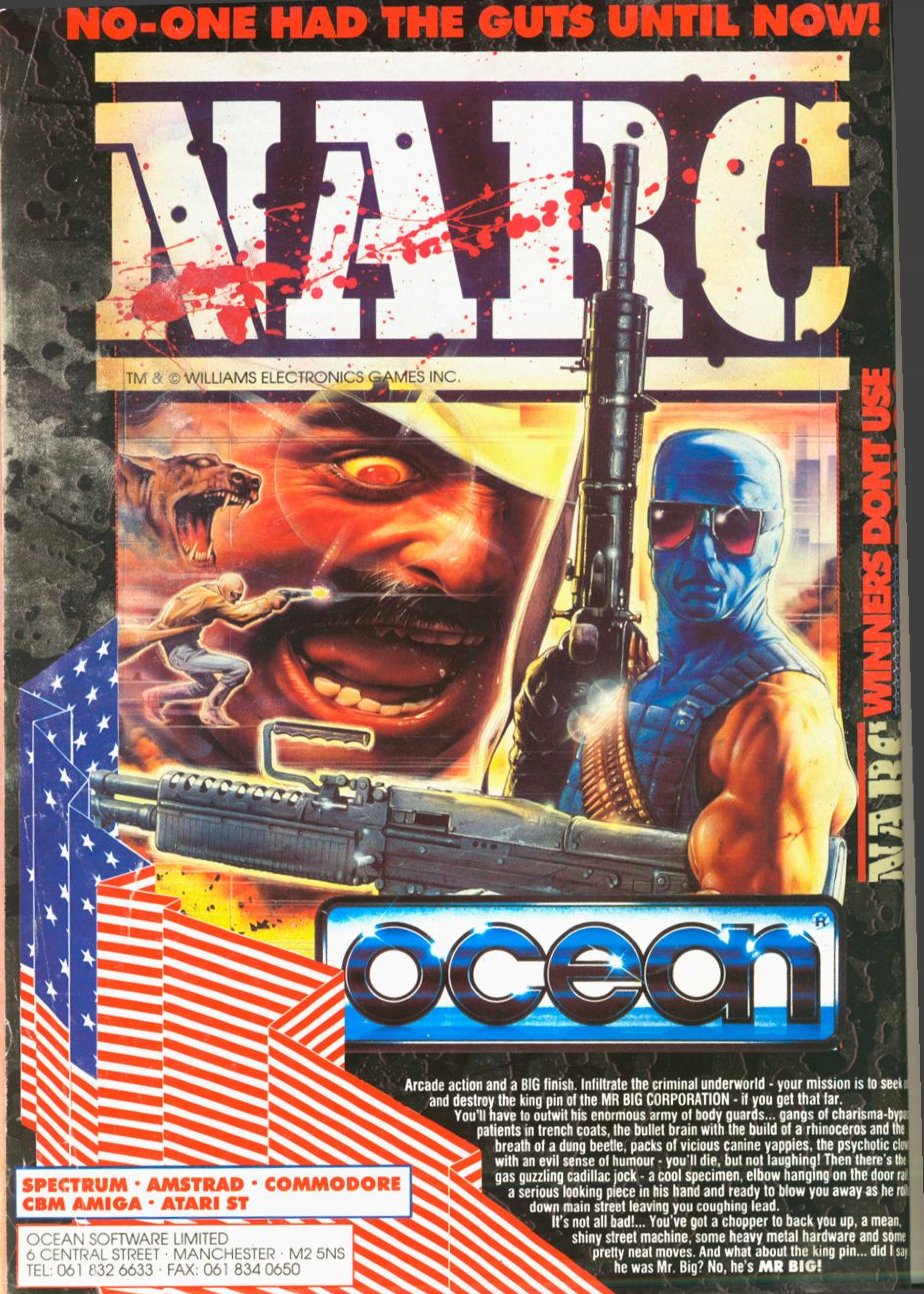
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with an evil sense of humour - you'll die, but not laughing! Then there's the
gas guzzling cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door ra
a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away as he ro
down main street leaving you coughing lead.
It's not all bad!... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean,
shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some
pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I sa
he was Mr. Big? No, he's **MR BIG!**

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